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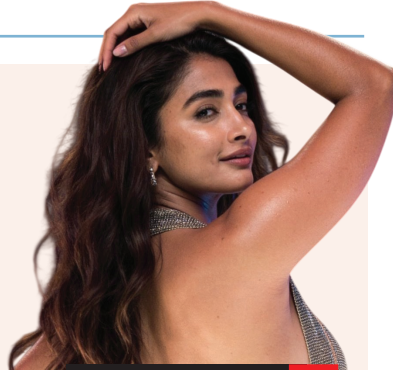
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## MARSH MASTECLASS DOWNS CSK

STADIUM 11

## POOJA IS SET FOR RESET OF HER CAREER



BOX-OFFICE 12

## Southwest Monsoon to Reach Kerala on May 26



HYDERABAD, MAY 15

The southwest monsoon, considered the lifeline of India's agriculture-based economy, is expected to reach Kerala on May 26. Usually, the monsoon arrives by June 1, but this time it is likely to hit Kerala five days earlier, the India Meteorological Department announced on Friday. Even today, more than 50 percent of the country's cultivated land primarily depends on rainfall. Nearly 40 percent of the nation's total agricultural output comes from these rain-fed farmlands. Therefore, the southwest monsoon plays a crucial role in India's food security and economic stability.



HYDERABAD, MAY 15:

Chief Minister Shri A Revanth Reddy said that Rahul Gandhi will be the Prime Minister candidate in the next general elections since the Congress leader has a clear objective to bring the Congress party back to power. Participating in the Way2 News Conclave today, the Chief minister said that Rahul Gandhi does not harbor a personal ambition to become Prime Minister. However, he convinced the leader to accept the demand of a PM candidate for the party during a meeting held recently in Vikarabad. The Congress party will make an

## Rahul will be INDIA alliance's PM candidate

Rahul Gandhi is convinced as PM candidate in Vikarabad meeting

CM Revanth Reddy demands Bandi Sanjay to surrender his son before police

- Police are probing the POCSSO case against Bandi Sanjay's son
- CM took a dig at BRS for making hue and cry
- Modi and him spoke as government representatives on central assistance to Telangana
- Facing criticism for demolishing illegal structures at lakes, ponds and government lands
- Government is ready to provide compensation to those who are affected under Musi Rejuvenation project
- Future city will be a "game changer"
- Telangana Rising 2047 will make state as number one in the country
- CM Revanth attended Way2 News conclave in Hyderabad today

announcement first, and subsequently, convince the INDIA alliance partners to endorse Rahul Gandhi as PM candidate. Rahul Gandhi will be the Prime Ministerial candidate representing the INDIA alliance in the next elections. We will present a comprehensive policy document on behalf of the INDIA alliance and seek the public's mandate upon it. The Chief Minister said that he will also extend services to the nation by utilizing his experience for the benefit of the country. "My goal is to elevate Rahul Gandhi as the next Prime Minister of India and he is ready to accept any responsibility entrusted to him by the

party at national level". The Chief minister expressed serious concern over the fast changing perception of the people on politics. Nowadays, people desire "Swiggy-style politics" which deliver results instantly and directly to their doorstep. Stating that he never crossed boundaries, CM Revanth Reddy recalled that he worked for the TDP for 10 years and the Telugu Desam President N Chandrababu Naidu was still treating him with great respect. It is rare for leaders to maintain good relations after leaving a political party.

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## TVK MLA MUSTAFA'S U-TURN ON SANATANA DHARMA SPARKS FRESH DOUBTS DAMAGE CONTROL OR DEEP-ROOTED AGENDA EXPOSED?

BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

Tamil Nadu politics has once again stepped into dangerous ideological territory after TVK MLA VMS Mustafa openly declared that Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam entered politics to "abolish Sanatana Dharma," only to hurriedly issue a clarification claiming the party is not against any religion. The controversy has now exploded into a larger political question about whether this was merely an individual outburst or a reflection of a deeper ideological current within the party. With BJP leaders accusing TVK of playing a double game and Vijay maintaining a studied silence, the row has exposed growing public unease over repeated attacks on Sanatana Dharma in Tamil Nadu's political discourse.

One moment, the MLA stood outside the Assembly and boldly declared that Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam entered politics inspired by Periyar and Ambedkar to abolish Sanatana Dharma. The next moment, after outrage erupted across social media and political circles, came the carefully packaged clarification video insisting that neither he nor his party was against Hinduism or any religion. That abrupt reversal has only intensified suspicion rather than calming tempers.

The core issue here is not merely about one controversial statement. Politicians often misspeak, exaggerate, or become emotional in the heat of political mobilisation. But Mustafa's original remarks were neither vague nor accidental. They carried ideological conviction. They echoed a familiar Dravidian political vocabulary that has repeatedly framed Sanatana Dharma as an oppressive structure rather than a broad civilisational tradition followed by millions of Hindus across India.

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## Telangana as a Global Exports Hub Minister Sridhar Babu at the "EIPC India Southern Region Awards for Export" event

HYDERABAD, MAY 15

State IT and Industries Minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu said that Telangana is making remarkable progress in engineering exports and that the government is working systematically to transform the state into a global exports hub. He explained that special emphasis is being placed on developing

future-ready international-standard industrial parks, electronics manufacturing clusters, logistics infrastructure, skilling ecosystems, and innovation networks. The minister attended the "48th EIPC India Southern Region Awards for Export" program held on Friday at ITC Kakatiya, Begumpet, as the chief guest.

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## TDP to Hold Mahanaadu 2026 in Virtually



AMARAVATI, MAY 15

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has decided to conduct its annual "Mahanaadu 2026" in virtual mode on May 27 and 28 as part of cost-saving measures. CMand TDP president N. Chandrababu Naidu directed party leaders to organize the event online from NTR Bhavan. Digital screens will be set up in 1,845 clusters across the state to enable participation by party workers and supporters. Senior leaders and Politburo members will participate from the party headquarters.



## CS directs officials to fast-track high-speed rail proposals

HYDERABAD, MAY 15

Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao on Friday held a meeting at the Secretariat with senior officials from relevant departments to discuss the proposed high-speed rail corridor projects focused on Hyderabad. During the meeting, the Chief Secretary urged officials to collaborate with the Telangana government and the Union

Ministry of Railways to prepare proposals. He emphasised the importance of inter-departmental cooperation in the development of project reports and implementation processes. Additionally, he advised officials to take necessary steps regarding land acquisition, connectivity, infrastructure development, and other aspects of the project. The Chief Secretary high-

lighted the potential of the high-speed rail project, which will link Hyderabad with major cities such as Mumbai, Chennai, and Bengaluru, to transform Telangana into an "Economic Growth Corridor" by 2047. He also pointed out that this initiative would lay the groundwork for efficient transportation across the country, addressing future public needs and

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## SLEDGEHAMMER OVER THE GULF

### WASHINGTON'S NEW WAR GAMBLE

THREATENS TO SHAKE THE WORLD OIL ORDER AND TEST THE LIMITS OF PRESIDENTIAL POWER

NEW NAME. OLD WAR. DANGEROUS GAME. Operation Sledgehammer could be Trump's masterstroke or America's next big mistake.

CEASEFIRE ON LIFE SUPPORT. CONGRESS DIVIDED. IRAN READY TO STRIKE BACK.

BY C SUBRAHMANYAM

Washington has once again begun speaking in the language of gunmetal resolve. Not through formal declarations. Not through solemn addresses from marble podiums. The signal is travelling through whispers inside Pentagon corridors, through coded military briefings, through carefully planted leaks and calibrated public statements meant to prepare the American mind for another season of confrontation.

The new phrase circulating in those hardened rooms of power is enough to send a chill across diplomatic capitals. OPERATION SLEDGEHAMMER. The title itself sounds less like a military mission and more like a declaration that the era of restraint is rapidly evaporating. Only weeks ago, the White House proudly announced that Operation Epic Fury had delivered a punishing blow against Iranian military capability and regional networks. American carrier groups, bombers, drones and allied forces unleashed one of the fiercest concentrated assaults witnessed in West Asia in recent years. Missile systems were target-

## WASHINGTON'S NEW WAR GAMBLE THREATENS TO SHAKE THE WORLD OIL ORDER AND TEST THE LIMITS OF PRESIDENTIAL POWER

The uneasy silence over the Persian Gulf is cracking once again. After the violent firestorm of Operation Epic Fury, Washington is now weighing a dangerous second act under a chilling new banner called OPERATION SLEDGEHAMMER. Behind the military jargon lies a deeper and far more explosive story involving constitutional manoeuvring, strategic brinkmanship, oil warfare, and America's attempt to retain global dominance through calibrated fear. President Donald Trump's White House insists it is preserving peace through strength. Critics inside America warn that a fresh military label may be masking an effort to bypass war powers scrutiny. As Tehran hedges its tone, Congress fumes, and the Strait of Hormuz remains on edge, the world stands before a geopolitical powder keg whose tremors will be felt from Washington to New Delhi.

ed. Naval positions were smashed. Strategic installations linked to Tehran's defence grid came under relentless attack. The operation was presented to the American public as swift, controlled and successful. But wars are not cinema productions that end when the credits roll. The ceasefire which followed now resembles a cracked glass wall waiting for the next impact. President Trump himself has publicly admitted that the truce is surviving on what he dramatically described as "massive life support."

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**CEMENTING DREAMS WITH SUPERIOR STRENGTH.**

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## BJP LEADERS WON THROUGH FRAUDULENT VOTES, CLAIMS TPCC CHIEF MAHESH GOUD

HYDERABAD, MAY 15

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president Mahesh Kumar Goud on Friday alleged that Union Ministers Bandi Sanjay Kumar and G. Kishan Reddy had won elections through "fraudulent votes" and were now "trembling with fear". Mahesh Kumar Goud, along with senior Congress leaders, met Telangana Chief Electoral Officer C. Sudharshan Reddy in Hyderabad and discussed the upcoming Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the state.

Addressing the media after the meeting, the TPCC chief alleged that large-scale "vote theft" had taken place during the SIR process in 14 states. He termed the conduct of the electoral revision exercise as "atrocious" and cited developments in West Bengal as evidence of alleged electoral manipulation.

He claimed that while 8.2 crore votes were added across the country, nearly 5.9 lakh votes were deleted simultaneously. Referring to West Bengal, he alleged that 90 lakh votes were removed while 60 lakh new votes were

added, thereby altering political equations and impacting election outcomes.

Stating that Telangana has no scheduled elections for the next two years, Mahesh Kumar Goud said the Congress party had requested the Election Commission authorities to extend the SIR exercise over one year. He also demanded that voters be given at least three months to submit supporting documents, especially poor voters who may face difficulties in furnishing records. Further, he suggested that Booth Level Officers should visit voters' homes at least three times for proper verification.

Expressing concern over the deletion of votes of people residing abroad, he said such removals should not be carried out arbitrarily. He alleged that attempts were being made to delete votes that do not favour the BJP.

Calling upon citizens to safeguard their voting rights, he said the SIR process in Telangana would begin on June 25 and voter data collection would continue till July 24. The revised voter list, he added, would be published on October 1.

## SCSC Launches "Suraksha Kavach College girls Safety and Well-being" program

Hyderabad, May 15: The Society for Cyberabad Security Council (SCSC) launched the "Suraksha Kavach - College Women Safety & Well-being Handbook" aimed at promoting youth safety, mental wellness, anti-drug awareness, and responsible campus culture through student-led safety clubs.

The launch event brought together senior police officials, educationists, mental health experts, civil society representatives, and students to encourage collective efforts for safer educational institutions.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. M. Ramesh stressed the importance of emotional well-being, disciplined lifestyles, and open communication in tackling stress, isolation, and substance abuse among youth. He said the police are taking strict action against drug peddlers and urged students to actively share information and seek support from mentors, teachers, and parents.



Actor-director Rahul Ravindran spoke about the dangers of addiction, peer pressure, and unhealthy coping mechanisms, encouraging students to pursue positive goals and participate in initiatives like Suraksha Kavach. Prof. Balakrista Reddy highlighted

the importance of mental health support systems, anti-ragging measures, and institutional safety mechanisms in colleges and universities.

K. Srujana emphasized the need for implementing Anti-Drug Committee guidelines, strengthening student safe-

ty clubs, and ensuring compliance with POSH and PCOSO norms in educational institutions. The event concluded with an interactive cultural session by the youth group Paatshaala and a collective rendition of Vande Mataram and the National Anthem.

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## Rahul will be INDIA alliance's PM candidate

FROM PAGE 1

He also informed Chandrababu about his quitting the TDP in Vijayawada. The Chief Minister reiterated that he will strive to achieve 10 per cent of the GDP from the Telangana state.

The government brought crimes against women under control, the CM said that police booked a case based on the complaint lodged by the mother of the minor girl on May 8 night at Pet Basheerabad police station. Police launched a probe on May 9 and amended the relevant sections. In view of PM Modi's visit, police were busy in security and issued notices with revised sections on the next day immediately. Union minister Bandi Sanjay's son also filed a complaint in Karimnagar. After evaluating the complaints and recording the girl's statement, notices were issued. People would have criticized the police if they stormed the house with huge force. The CM warned that action would be taken against anyone including from the film industry and politics. "We registered a PCOSO case which demonstrates the government's unwavering commitment to justice". We deployed five teams to handle this matter. Police personnel went to Bandi Sanjay's residence to serve a notice; subsequently, they proceeded to his brother-in-law's house.

CM Revanth Reddy took a dig at BRS leaders for making hue and cry on the issue of the case. Does filing a PCOSO case constitute an act of intimidation, or does it signify standing in support of the victim? NO one knew what exactly transpired between KTR and Bandi Sanjay. We will ensure that the guilty are punished in accordance with the law. The CM also clarified that the girl possessed two birth certificates and the police are investigating. No one will escape from the punishment even if delayed in the investigation.

CM Revanth Reddy recalled how he was imprisoned during the BRS rule. He never acted harshly towards the KCR family. Was BRS angry at Bandi Sanjay for opposing the merger of the BRS? "I am not running a charity house; I am running a government. Government stands firmly by 100 percent of the victims and will punish those who committed wrongdoing. A complaint was received regarding an incident that occurred prior to December. Going back four months to investigate events

from that time naturally takes time. Bandi Sanjay's conduct regarding the matter concerning his son is morally reprehensible. The union minister must face this situation with courage and his son's misconduct has brought disgrace upon him. The CM demanded Bandi Sanjay to come forward and give an explanation and also bring his son to the police station and hand him over to the authorities. He must face the inquiry and stand his ground instead of running away. If he fails to respond within the stipulated notice period, the police will take strict action.

Referring to the effective administration, the Chief minister said that he was undertaking district tours once every 15 days and also allocating funds. He was still residing in the same house since he became a ZPTC member, the CM said that he was allocating nominated posts exclusively to those leaders who have worked hard and dedicated themselves to the cause. The CM reiterated that the government is committed to the rejuvenation of the Musi river despite facing hurdles. The Chief Minister warned if anyone attempts to create trouble in utilizing the water resources and. Strict action would be taken against drug addicts.

CM Revanth Reddy made it clear that PM Modi and him spoke as the representatives of the central and state governments. The discussion was regarding cooperation between the respective governments and Modi is well aware of my commitment to politics. The Chief minister criticized former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao for not extending cooperation to the union government during the BRS rule. Modi requested to cooperate with the centre for more funds. He will act according to conscience and will not turn into an opportunist merely to secure opportunities.

As a public representative, he is clear in thinking. We should not aspire to convince 100 percent of the people. If 60 to 75 percent of the people endorse our ideas, that can be considered a monumental success. If we focus our efforts on trying to eliminate those who stand in our way, all our positive energy gets diverted in that direction.

The CM also pointed out that the ITIR corridor was allocated to Hyderabad during Congress rule and the successive governments cancelled it. The CM list-

ed the women welfare schemes - free travel for women in RTC buses by paying Rs 10,00 crore to the Corporation in 28 months. In the previous government, the RTC suffered huge financial losses. The Government was paying Rs 350 crore to RTC every month. Introduced EV vehicles by replacing diesel buses operating within the Hyderabad limits. 3,000 electric buses will be pressed into service saving Rs 2,000 crore rupees on diesel.

The CM explained the "Telangana Rising 2047" policy document which also included public opinion and organized a global summit, inviting all the major organizations from around the world. The relocation of the polluting industries currently situated within this CORE Urban Region was under progress.

CM Revanth Reddy expressed serious concern on the encroachment of lakes, ponds, drainages, public parks, and government lands. Nature will not forgive those who encroached upon. The CM cited a Japanese proverb that says: "People may forget if you pollute a city, but they will never forget if you pollute its water sources." Thummidikunta was encroached upon and a function hall was built there. The illegal construction created problems for water flow. The government is removing encroachments to save ponds and water bodies. "I am doing nothing for myself or for my own home. I am doing it for the people. I am prepared to endure a certain amount of criticism. Which political party's leader encroached upon the Bathukamma pond? It was the leader who encroached the pond hired a helicopter to shower flowers upon his party leaders. Double-bedroom houses were being given as compensation to those who lost their houses in demolition at the encroached lakes and tanks. The government is extending generous support to those currently residing illegally along the Musi River and pledged to construct double-bedroom houses for them and to provide access to education and healthcare. The Chief minister lambasted the BRS for provoking the residents in the encroached areas.

ON the future city, CM Revanth Reddy said that industries will be set up within a radius of the 'Future City' zone. We will also set up IT firms, GCCs (Global Capability Centers), and various industries in

this area. Agro-based and allied industries will be established in the rural areas surrounding the city. "We are developing 'Bharat Future City' across a sprawling 30,000 acres and constructing radial roads connecting the Outer Ring Road to the Regional Ring Road. The union government sanctioned 3 of the 7 bullet trains to Hyderabad, the CM said that a Bullet Train Hub will be established in Shamshabad.

Rebutting the opposition allegations, the chief minister said that the real estate sector is performing well in Telangana. The realty growth has slowed down globally due to various factors. Revenue generated from property transactions increased. The CM took a dig at some leaders for spreading lies on social media against the government. They are living in a world of illusions. However, I remain grounded in reality. I do not inhabit a world of pure fantasy.

The CM also explained measures taken to curb drug menace by introducing 'Eagle Force'. Some leaders were caught partying at farmhouses during Diwali festival. "My sole intention is to do something for future generations.

Referring to the Kaleshwaram project, CM revanth Reddy said that the Medigadda barrage was damaged due to failure of the previous government. The Chief minister remembered that the first Prime Minister Nehru established educational institutions and universities and constructed irrigation projects. Indira Gandhi championed reforms focused on social justice and welfare. Former PM PV Narasimha Rao and Manmohan Singh introduced economic reforms.

The CM also highlighted that 1.9 million students enrolled across 27,000 government schools and the student-to-teacher ratio stands at one teacher for every 18 students. 3.8 million students were attending 12,000 private schools. In the past, schools were constructed along caste and religious lines. We are developing Young India Integrated Schools which are home to students from all castes and religions. 100 integrated schools were being constructed at a cost of Rs 20,000 crore. Already, 2,500 students are pursuing their education. Breakfast, mid-day meals, and snacks were also provided in government schools.

## CS directs officials to fast-track high-speed rail proposals

FROM PAGE 1

promoting growth in the industrial, IT, and tourism sectors. Railway officials reported that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the Hyd-Pune-Mumbai high-speed rail corridor has been completed, with proposals in place for the approximately 671-kilometer route. They noted that land acquisition would be necessary for 93 kilometers within Telangana.

Additionally, officials mentioned that land acquisition would also be required along approximately 123 kilometers of the Hyderabad-Bengaluru and Hyderabad-

Chennai corridors, including the Kokapet and Shamshabad areas for the construction of railway depots. The Chief Secretary instructed officials from the Roads and Buildings department, HMDA, and GMR Airport to work in coordination with Central Railway project officials and provide their support for the high-speed rail project. Special Chief Secretaries Vikas Raj and Naveen Mittal, HMDA Metropolitan Commissioner Sarfaraz Ahmed, officials from the Union Ministry of Railways, and officials from GMR Airport participated in the meeting.

## Telangana as a Global Exports Hub

FROM PAGE 1

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Sridhar Babu said that India's engineering exports crossed a record USD 116.67 billion in 2024-25. He noted that this accounts for 27% of the country's total merchandise exports, reflecting the growing strength of the Indian economy.

He stated that Telangana is among the leading states contributing significantly to the growth of India's engineering exports. The state's share in sectors such as aerospace, defense, electronics, pharmaceuticals, and EV mobility is increasing steadily at the national level.

The minister highlighted that Telangana's engineering exports reached USD 7.5 billion in the last financial year, which demonstrates the state's industrial growth.

He observed that manufacturing and

technology were once seen as separate domains, but today only their integration can enable a strong position in the global supply chain. In this direction, the government is committed to building an ecosystem powered by AI, automation, robotics, and digital manufacturing to strengthen the "Made in Telangana" brand globally.

He added that the government is taking responsibility for creating a "ready-to-work workforce" required for the export sector. Minister Sridhar Babu invited leading industrialists to collaborate with the state government and assured that steps would be taken to reopen the EEPC regional office in Hyderabad. Former NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam, along with EEPC India representatives Pankaj Chadha, Raman Raghu, Shashi Louis, and others, participated in the event.

## AP Gets Major Defence Boost with Rs.5,000 Crore Strategic Projects

PUTTAPARTHI, MAY 15

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Friday launched a series of defence and aerospace projects worth over Rs.5,000 crore across Andhra Pradesh. Key projects include the Rs.2,000 crore Core Integration & Flight Testing Centre for India's Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) programme at Puttaparthi and a Rs.480 crore Naval Systems Manufacturing

Facility in Anakapalli district. The leaders also launched a Rs.1,500 crore Defence Energetics Facility and a Rs.1,200 crore Ammunition & Electric Fuse Plant at Madakasira, while a consortium of firms announced plans for a Drone City in Kurnool. Rajnath Singh described the projects as "historic" and said they would strengthen India's defence capabilities and generate large-scale employment. Chandrababu Naidu said Andhra Pradesh is fast emerging as a major defence and aerospace hub.

# TVK MLA MUSTAFA'S U-TURN ON SANATANA DHARMA..

FROM PAGE 1

And once those words entered the public domain, the political consequences became immediate and unavoidable.

**FIRST THEY SPEAK WITH IDEOLOGICAL CONFIDENCE. THEN THEY RETURN WITH POLITICAL CLARIFICATIONS WHEN THE ELECTORAL TEMPERATURE RISES. TAMIL NADU HAS SEEN THIS PATTERN BEFORE. THE VIJAY QUESTION IS NOW GROWING LOUDER**

The controversy has now shifted directly toward TVK chief Vijay. or months, Vijay has attempted to project himself as a fresh political alternative capable of transcending old Dravidian binaries while retaining the emotional connect of Tamil identity politics. That balancing act helped him attract support from multiple social sections, including a substantial number of Hindu voters who viewed him as a cleaner and less confrontational figure compared to traditional Dravidian formations. But politics becomes

dangerous when ambiguity replaces clarity. Mustafa's statement has now forced uncomfortable questions into the open. Was this merely the personal ideological expression of one MLA or does it reflect a deeper current within TVK's political thinking? If the party genuinely believes in inclusive governance, then why has there not been an immediate and categorical political response from the leadership itself? Vijay's silence has become politically louder than Mustafa's remarks. Every passing hour without a firm position strengthens the opposition narrative that TVK is attempting to maintain two parallel political languages. One language seeks Hindu votes during elections with promises of governance and development. The other continues to flirt with aggressive anti Sanatana rhetoric inherited from sections of Dravidian ideological politics. That contradiction is now at the heart of this controversy.

**SANATANA DHARMA HAS BECOME THE NEW POLITICAL BATTLEFIELD**  
This latest episode cannot be viewed in isolation. It arrives immediately after renewed comments from Udhayanidhi Stalin calling for

the abolition of Sanatana Dharma inside the Assembly. The repetition of such rhetoric from multiple political figures has created the perception of a coordinated ideological campaign rather than isolated remarks. That perception matters enormously in a politically sensitive climate. For millions of Hindus, Sanatana Dharma is not merely a theological concept. It represents an ancient civilisational continuum encompassing philosophy, spirituality, customs, family traditions, sacred practices, and moral frameworks. Many may disagree on social issues within Hindu society, including caste discrimination and untouchability, but attacking the very foundation of Sanatana Dharma itself is viewed by large sections as an attack on identity and heritage. This is where political rhetoric becomes combustible. There is a profound difference between advocating social reform and declaring ideological war against a faith tradition. Reform movements challenge injustices while preserving social harmony. Political slogans calling for abolition create polarisation, fear, and emotional backlash. That distinction is now becoming central to the Tamil Nadu political debate.

**THE REAL POLITICAL DAMAGE DID NOT COME FROM THE CLARIFICATION VIDEO. IT CAME FROM THE FACT THAT PEOPLE HEARD THE ORIGINAL STATEMENT FIRST. THE CLARIFICATION VIDEO LOOKS MORE LIKE CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

The optics of Mustafa's clarification video have themselves become a subject of public discussion. The carefully staged imagery featuring women chanting Hindu mantras and invoking deities appeared designed to reassure angry Hindu voters that TVK carries no anti Hindu agenda. But political image repair often struggles when it follows a direct ideological declaration already captured on video. In politics, first impressions usually travel farther than corrections. The BJP has seized upon this moment aggressively. Leaders such as Shanthi Kumar have accused TVK of exposing its "real face" after seeking Hindu support during elections. Their argument is simple and politically effective. They claim the clarification only arrived because the back-

lash became electorally dangerous. Whether that accusation is fully fair or politically exaggerated is now secondary. The narrative has already entered public consciousness. And in politics, perception often becomes reality faster than facts can catch up.

**WHY SANATANA DHARMA HAS BECOME A POLITICAL FLASHPOINT IN TAMIL NADU**

The debate around Sanatana Dharma is rooted in Tamil Nadu's long Dravidian political history. Leaders like Periyar launched powerful critiques against caste hierarchy and Brahminical dominance

during the twentieth century. Over time, however, sections of Dravidian politics evolved from social reform rhetoric into broader ideological opposition toward symbols associated with Hindu traditions. In recent years, national politics has further intensified this divide. The BJP's rise has strengthened open Hindu political assertion across India, while sections of Tamil Nadu politics have responded with sharper ideological resistance. As a result, Sanatana

Dharma has transformed from a philosophical and religious concept into a charged political battlefield carrying enormous emotional and electoral consequences. That explains why every remark on the issue now triggers immediate national attention.

**TAMIL NADU'S VOTERS ARE WATCHING VERY CAREFULLY**

Tamil Nadu's electorate is politically mature and historically unpredictable. Voters in the state have repeatedly demonstrated that they reward clarity and punish perceived arrogance or ideological excess. This controversy arrives at a crucial moment for TVK, which is still shaping its political identity before the people. The party cannot afford confusion on matters involving faith, identity, and social harmony. Mixed messaging creates distrust. Silence creates speculation. Delayed clarification creates suspicion. The people now expect consistency rather than tactical adjustments after public outrage.

At a broader level, this episode also exposes a dangerous trend within modern politics where sensitive civilisational questions are

increasingly weaponised for ideological mobilisation. India's constitutional framework protects every religion equally. That principle demands restraint, responsibility, and balance from all political actors. Selective attacks on one community's foundational beliefs while preaching inclusivity elsewhere only deepen social fractures.

**A MOMENT OF POLITICAL CLARITY THAT TVK CAN NO LONGER AVOID**

Tamil Nadu stands at a political crossroads where rhetoric is becoming sharper and ideological battles more emotionally charged. TVK now faces a defining test of credibility. It must clearly establish whether it intends to build a genuinely inclusive political movement or merely repackage older confrontational politics under a new face and fresh branding. Mustafa's statement may have begun as one MLA's declaration, but it has now evolved into a larger referendum on political honesty, ideological intent, and cultural sensitivity. The clarification may have slowed the fire temporarily. It certainly has not extinguished the questions. And the voters are listening very carefully.

# Tourism Week Celebrations Across Telangana from May 18 to 23

Brochure Unveiled by Minister Jupally Krishna Rao

HYDERABAD

As part of the Telangana Government's prestigious "Praja Palana - Pragati Pranali" initiative, Tourism Week celebrations will be conducted across Telangana from May 18 to 23. Tourism, Culture, and Archaeology Minister Jupally Krishna Rao unveiled the special brochure related to the celebrations on Friday at his chamber in the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Telangana Secretariat. The event was attended by Special Chief Secretary of the Tourism, Language & Culture, and Archaeology Departments Vani Prasad, and Tourism Department Director Lakshman Ranjith Naik. Marking International Museum Day, the minister will formally inaugurate the Tourism Week celebrations on May 18 at the State Museum in Hyderabad.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Jupally Krishna Rao said that the celebrations would help showcase Telangana's immense tourism potential to the world. He stated that the main ob-



jective of the program is to promote the state's historical heritage, culture, and eco-tourism destinations, while also creating public awareness about employment opportunities generated through the tourism sector.

He said the Tourism Department is organizing the celebrations in coordination with the Language & Culture Department, Archaeology (Heritage) Department, and National Institute of Tourism and Hospitality Management (NITHM).

As part of the week-long celebrations, heritage walks, tourism awareness seminars, cleanliness drives at major tourist

destinations, interactions with social media influencers and YouTubers, and district-level promotional programs will be conducted.

The minister noted that Telangana's tourism sector enjoys tremendous popularity. He said globally renowned destinations such as the Ramappa Temple, Nagarjuna Sagar, Buddhavanam, Jogulamba Temple, Laknavaram Lake, Bogatha Waterfall, Paigah Tombs, Raymond's Tomb, Gunfoundry, Khazana Building, Panagal Museum, and the historic monuments of Warangal attract both domestic and international tourists in large numbers. He emphasized

that the government is giving special focus to integrated tourism development through infrastructure creation, conservation of heritage sites, promotion of cultural tourism, and participation of local communities.

As part of the action plan, folk art performances, Perini dance shows, classical dance programs, literary events, and music concerts reflecting Telangana's cultural traditions will be organized at Ravindra Bharathi and all district headquarters across the state. The minister also announced that a "Tourism Conclave 2026" themed "Destination Telangana: Strategies for the Next Frontier of Tourism" will be held in Hyderabad on May 23.

He explained that tourism stakeholders, hospitality experts, and policymakers will participate in the conclave to discuss future strategies required to transform Telangana into one of the leading tourism destinations in the country. Minister Jupally expressed confidence that these celebrations, inspired by the spirit of "Praja Palana - Pragati Pranali," would bring a new vibrancy to Telangana's tourism sector.

## Issue Health Cards to Employees Before June 2..!

\* Release Pending Bills Immediately

\* Implement the Assurances Given by the Chief Minister

\* Telangana Employees JAC Chairman V. Lachireddy urges the Chief Secretary at the Joint Staff Council meeting

HYDERABAD

Telangana Employees JAC Chairman V. Lachireddy and General Secretary Vodnala Rajasekhara urged the government to take steps to provide health cards to all employees in the state before June 2. They also demanded the immediate clearance of all pending bills and resolution of employees' issues. They further called for the implementation of every assurance recently given by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to employees. They also de-

manded the implementation of the 2nd PRC before June 2.

The Joint Staff Council meeting related to state government employees was held on Friday at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar State Secretariat under the chairmanship of State Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao. Leaders of 15 recognized employee unions participated in the meeting. On this occasion, Telangana Employees JAC Chairman V. Lachireddy and General Secretary Vodnala Rajasekhara brought several issues to the notice of the Chief Secretary.

They demanded the immediate provision of cashless treatment under the Employees Health Scheme. They also sought the appointment of sons and daughters of legally eligible VRA employees above 61 years of age in the Revenue Department. They urged the government to reinstate 632 computer operators and FTS employees who were removed from the Revenue Department.

They demanded the abolition of the CPS and restoration of the Old Pension Scheme (OPS). They also requested the establishment of a special corporation for outsourcing employees to ensure job security. Further, they demanded the immediate release of five pending Dearness Allowances (DAs). They also sought the continuation of Dharani operators' services in the Revenue Department.

Among those who participated in the meeting were Deputy Collectors Association state president and secretary V. Lachireddy and K. Ramakrishna; Telangana Tahsildars Association president and secretary S. Ramulu and Ramesh Paka; Telangana Region Employees Association (TPUS) state president and secretary Hanmantha Rao and D. Bhaskar; TGRSA state president and secretary Banala Ram Reddy and V. Bhiksham; GPO Association president Garika Upender Rao, and others.

## BRS Leaders Slam R.S. Praveen Kumar Over Remarks on POCSO Case

HYDERABAD

Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) leaders Chiluka Praveen and Surarapu Krishna Veni strongly criticized R. S. Praveen Kumar, alleging that he is making daily "Jabardasth skits" based on "farmhouse scripts".

They questioned whether targeting their party leader was justified when she demanded justice in a POCSO case involving the son of Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar.

The leaders said that instead of ensuring justice for the victim, political parties were engaging in drama and diversion tactics. They demanded that pressure be put on the government to arrest the accused rather than politicizing the issue.

Speaking to the media at the Telan-



gana Rakshana Sena office in Banjara Hills on Friday, they alleged that BRS leaders were trying to gain political mileage from the case and even dragging the victim's name into controversy. They said that BRS leader Kavitha

Kalkavuntla had only demanded that the victim's privacy be protected and that the accused should be arrested, but she was being unfairly targeted for it. Chiluka Praveen questioned why R.S. Praveen Kumar was criticizing

Kavitha for speaking in support of the victim, and whether justice for the victim was really the priority.

He further alleged that instead of questioning those shielding the accused or the police for filing weak

charges, attention was being diverted toward political criticism.

He challenged the opposition to protest in front of the Chief Minister's office or Bandi Sanjay's residence if they were truly serious about justice.

Surarapu Krishna Veni also questioned why R.S. Praveen Kumar did not speak out in earlier incidents, including the alleged suicide of a woman journalist and other POCSO-related cases involving individuals linked to political circles.

They reiterated that their party's intention was only to ensure justice for the victim and not to politicize sensitive incidents. The leaders concluded that the public is closely watching these "political dramas" and would respond appropriately in due course.

## Saraswati Anthya Pushkaralu at Kaleshwaram



Minister Konda Surekha Invites Deputy CM

HYDERABAD

The Telangana government is making elaborate arrangements to conduct the Saraswati River Anthya Pushkaralu at the famous pilgrimage center of Kaleshwaram in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district. State Endowments Minister Konda Surekha, along with Endowments Department Director M. Hanumantha Rao and senior officials, personally visited Praja Bhavan and invited Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka to participate in the Pushkar celebrations. On the occasion, Vedic scholars blessed the Deputy CM with Vedic chants and rituals.

Pushkaralu from May 21 to June 1

Minister Konda Surekha informed

that the Saraswati Anthya Pushkaralu will be held for 12 days from May 21 to June 1 at Kaleshwaram.

The festivities will begin on May 21 at 5:43 AM with the first holy Pushkar bath. Sri Shankara Vijayendra Saraswati Swamy, the head of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham, will perform the inaugural Pushkar bath.

Special Arrangements for Devotees

The minister stated that daily Ganga Harati will be performed at the Triveni Sangamam, extensive arrangements are being made for pilgrims, and the government is ensuring devotees do not face any inconvenience during the festival. The Telangana government is treating the Pushkar event as a prestigious spiritual occasion and is coordinating large-scale facilities and services for visiting devotees.

## TGSW RJC-CET-2026 Entrance Exam Successfully Conducted

HYDERABAD

The Telangana Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TGSWREIS) successfully conducted the TGSW RJC-CET-2026 entrance examination across the state for admissions into Intermediate first year courses for the academic year 2026-27, including Sainik, COE, Non-COE, and Vocational colleges.

The notification for admissions was released on April 5, 2026. Online applications were accepted from April 6 to April 25, 2026. A total of 45,357 applications were received.

Stream-wise applications included:

MPC Group: 21,447  
BiPC Group: 17,400  
MEC/CEC/HEC Groups: 6,510  
For the 2026-27 academic year, admissions will be offered in 231 TGSWR institutions across the state, with a total of 19,860 seats. The examination was conducted in 117 centers across Telangana.

On May 15, 2026, the exam was held successfully, with 39,400 students appearing, recording an overall attendance of 86.87%.

Group-wise attendance:

MPC: 18,870 students (87.98%)  
BiPC: 15,173 students (87.20%)  
MEC/CEC/HEC: 5,357 students (82.28%)  
The examination was conducted peacefully without any untoward incidents, according to TGSWREIS Secretary (FAC) Smt. Sharada.

## Funds and Functions for Caste Corporations Soon: Minister Ponnam Prabhakar

Meeting of Perika Community Representatives

HYDERABAD

Telangana BC Welfare Minister Ponnam Prabhakar has announced that the state government will soon allocate funds to newly formed caste-based corporations and issue clear orders defining their roles and responsibilities.

He said that the Congress government has created several dedicated corporations for various Backward Class (BC) communities—an unprecedented step in history—and that these bodies will help in the development and welfare of respective communities.

The event was held at the Welfare Bhavan in Hyderabad,



where the Perika caste corporation chairman Dongari Venkateswarlu and vice-chairman Budagari Srinivas formally assumed charge from BC Corporation Commissioner Balamaya Devi.

Speaking as the chief guest at the programme organized under the leadership of Perika community state president Dr.

G. Vijay Kumar, the minister said that the government is implementing welfare schemes through BC corporations while also continuing general BC welfare programmes.

He reiterated that all corporations will receive adequate funding and that detailed guidelines will be issued regarding expenditure, responsi-

bilities, and operational structure.

The minister appreciated the Perika community for its unity and developmental activities. He noted that the community has been running student hostels for over 50 years and is now constructing a girls' hostel, which he described as a commendable initiative.

He also mentioned that Perika community members are building an "Atma Gaurava Bhavan" at Kokapet through self-contributions, and assured that the government would extend financial assistance for the project.

The programme was attended by Aler MLA Beerla Ilaiah, MLC Pingili Sri Pal Reddy, community leaders Vijay Kumar, Madda Lingayya, Veera Bhaskar, and others.

**CORRIGENDUM - 1**

Corrigendum No. 1 for Tender Notice No.: KIR-N-2026-K-7 dtd.: 11-05-2026.

Name of work : Upgradation of Network for Modernisation of PRS Network in Katihar division.

SN	Special technical criteria	Existing	TO BE READ AS
1	10.1 Technical Eligibility Criteria:	Similar nature of work means: Any Telecom work with supply of materials.	Similar nature of work means - Any kind of Telecom indoor work with or without outdoor work with supply of materials. NOTE: (1) If tenderer is not OEM then MOU for technical support in installation, commissioning, post commissioning maintenance problems, failures and supply of its spares to be submitted from OEM. (2) Satisfactory working certificate for the type and make of equipment offered.

All other term and conditions will remain same.

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## Key Turn in POCSO Case Against Bandi Sanjay's Son

**HYDERABAD:** A key development has taken place in the POCSO case registered against the son of BJP leader Bandi Sanjay Kumar. While the investigation is ongoing, police have reportedly gained clarity regarding the age of the victim. As part of the inquiry, police examined the birth certificate submitted by the victim. Officials said it has been confirmed that she was born in a private hospital in Hyderabad. Police also reviewed the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) birth records corresponding to that year. After examining all these documents, police have reportedly concluded that the victim is a minor. Investigations into other aspects of the case are still continuing, officials added.

## BJP condemn not allowing saffron shawls in schools in Karnataka

**HYDERABAD:** Telangana State BJP chief official spokesperson and Media in-charge N V Subhash today strongly criticised Karnataka government for using "colours" to derive political mileage. "Not allowing saffron shawls in schools is nothing but an appeasement policy to garner support of Muslims by grand old Congress party which has been practising for decades, Subhash alleged and asked why Karnataka CM is so particular in allowing students to wear Hijab. Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah's order is to save his CM seat and he should understand that saffron colour also similar one of the seven natural colours of Rainbow, he said.

# KTR Inspects TMS Hospital at Sanath Nagar, Demands Immediate Completion of Remaining Works

**KTR: TMS Designed to Deliver AIIMS-Level Treatment in Telangana**

**TMS Hospital Infrastructure Among the Best in India: KTR**

**KCR Dream Project TMS Bringing Corporate-Level Treatment to the Poor**

**HYDERABAD**

Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) Working President K. T. Rama Rao visited the TMS Hospital at Sanath Nagar on Friday and inspected the medical infrastructure and facilities along with former minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav. KTR later addressed the media at the hospital premises and highlighted the vision behind the establishment of TMS hospitals in Hyderabad. KTR stated that the Telangana government under the leadership of K. Chandrashekar Rao established TMS hospitals with the objective of providing world-class healthcare services to the people of Hyderabad.

He recalled that in the past, government healthcare in Hyderabad was largely dependent on hospitals like Gandhi and Osmania, but during the BRS government's tenure, modern



multi-speciality TMS hospitals were developed to offer advanced healthcare services comparable to premier institutions. "We envisioned and designed TMS hospitals to provide AIIMS-level medical treatment for the people of Hyderabad," KTR said. KTR explained that 22 acres of land were utilised for the construction of the Sanath Nagar TMS Hospital and that the facility was built with international standards and state-of-the-art medical technology.

He stated that the KCR government introduced TMS hospitals to provide high-quality treatment to the poor and middle-class sections while

competing with expensive corporate hospitals. KTR said that TMS hospitals were established at Sanath Nagar, LB Nagar, and Alwal to strengthen the public healthcare system in Hyderabad. He also noted that a massive 2,000-bed government hospital is being constructed in Warangal and that NIMS Hospital is also being expanded on a large scale.

Highlighting the infrastructure at Sanath Nagar TMS, KTR said the hospital consists of three major blocks and includes 300 ICU beds for emergency and critical care services. He further stated that a dedicated dharmashala facility has been arranged for attendants and family members

of patients. KTR revealed that the hospital was constructed with an expenditure of nearly ₹1,200 crore and remarked that had the KCR government continued in office, the hospital would have been fully completed two years ago.

The BRS Working President said that 16 advanced operation theatres have been established and that all major diagnostic facilities, including MRI and CT Scan services, are available within the hospital.

He also mentioned that special VIP suites have been developed and that dedicated facilities are being created for kidney-related research and treatment.

KTR said TMS is being developed as one of the country's

largest government healthcare systems with a significant number of medical personnel, along with dedicated research blocks, academic facilities, and a large auditorium. He added that a modern parking system capable of accommodating 1,000 vehicles at a time has also been developed. "The design and infrastructure of TMS Hospital stand among the finest government medical institutions in the country," KTR remarked.

He further stated that a special emergency ramp has been constructed to ensure quicker emergency access and directed officials to immediately improve the functioning of lifts within the hospital.

KTR also recalled that the BRS government had established nearly 350 Basi Dawkhanas across Telangana to provide accessible healthcare services to the poor at the grassroots level.

Demanding that the present government immediately complete the remaining construction and operational works, KTR urged authorities to make the hospital fully functional and accessible to the public at the earliest.

During the visit, KTR interacted with patients and medical staff at the hospital and enquired about the issues and challenges they were facing.

# GITAM's Kautilya School of Public Policy signs

**MoU with RBVRR Telangana Police Academy**

**HYDERABAD**

GITAM's Kautilya School of Public Policy (KSPP), Hyderabad, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the RBVRR Telangana Police Academy on 15 May 2026, marking a significant step towards strengthening collaboration between academia and law enforcement institutions.

The MoU documents were formally exchanged between Smt. Abhilasha Bisht, IPS, Director General of Police and Director of RBVRR Telangana Police Academy, and Dr. D. Gunasekaran, Registrar of GITAM. On the occasion, both dignitaries underscored the importance of partnerships between academic institutions and police training academies in advancing policy research, governance studies, leadership development, and capacity building.

Earlier, Smt. G. Kavitha, Deputy Director (In-service), RBVRR Telangana Police Academy, delivered the welcome address, highlighting the role of institutional collaborations in strengthening professional education and public policy engagement. The pro-

gramme concluded with a vote of thanks by Shri P. Sri Rama Murthy, Deputy Director (OD), RBVRR Telangana Police Academy.

Representing KSPP at the ceremony were Shivangi Sharma, General Manager (Programs), and Shivangi Pandey, Program Manager (MPP). The partnership aims to facilitate knowledge exchange and build capacity across key areas such as public policy, governance, leadership, and law enforcement practices.

As part of the collaboration, both institutions will jointly organise training programmes, workshops, seminars, and conferences for police officers and personnel. KSPP faculty will contribute academic expertise to training initiatives at the Police Academy, while the MoU also enables the exchange of faculty, experts, and resource persons.

The collaboration will focus on critical domains including Cyber Law and Cyber Security, Human Rights and Constitutional Law, Public Policy and Governance, and Leadership and Management. This initiative reflects a shared commitment to strengthening professional education and fostering interdisciplinary approaches to contemporary governance and policing challenges.

# Telangana to conduct State-wide mock exercises on May 18th

**HYDERABAD**

The Telangana government will conduct State-wide mock drills on May 18 to assess preparedness and strengthen emergency response systems for floods, forest fires and industrial accidents. Secretary Smt D.Hari Chandana on Friday reviewed the arrangements with officials at Command Control centre and directed all departments and district administrations to ensure effective coordination and timely response during the exercises. The mock drills are being organised to evaluate the preparedness of various departments and emergency



agencies in handling floods, forest fires and industrial accidents. Secretary said that the exercise would help assess the functioning of Emergency Operation Centres (EOCs), Incident Response Teams (IRTs), communication systems and inter-departmental coordination during emergency situations. Sri Vikram Singh Mann, D.G., Fire

Services said mock drills play a crucial role in identifying the gaps and resolving issues at our level to tackle floods, industrial and Fire accidents. He also said that, under the guidance of NDMA state has learned to improve preparedness and minimizing loss of life and property during disasters.

Major General Sudhir Behl (Retd.), Lead consultant, NDMA, gave a detailed presentation on the roles and responsibilities of the departments during mock exercises. He said that exercises help identify gaps in communication, rescue operations, coordination and resource mobilization.

# Revanth questions Bandi Sanjay's ethics in handling of son's case

**HYDERABAD**

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy criticised Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar regarding the case involving his son, Bandi Bageerath, who has been accused of sexually harassing a minor.

During his address at the Way2News Conclave 2026 in Hyderabad on Friday, Revanth Reddy emphasised that Bandi Sanjay's handling of the situation concerning his son is ethically questionable.

"The Union Minister must confront this issue head-on; his son's actions have brought shame to him. Bandi Sanjay should step up and offer an explanation. Furthermore, he needs to take his son to the police station and surrender him," stated Revanth Reddy. The Chief Minister added that Bandi Sanjay's son, Bageerath, must face the investigation and should not evade responsibility. "If Bageerath does not comply with the notice, the police will take stringent actions," Revanth Reddy warned.

He also asserted his obligation to act, not only in his capacity as Home Minister but also as Chief Minister. "Currently, five teams are engaged in this matter. The police visited Bandi Sanjay's home to deliver a notice and later went to his brother-in-law's residence. There are no exceptions for anyone, whether they are from the film industry or politics. In cases involving minors, one cannot afford to act recklessly," Revanth Reddy stated. "This issue relates to the future of children; even the smallest mistake could have lasting consequences. The girl has two birth certificates, and the police are investigating all of them. Even if there is a delay of a single day, they will not evade consequences. It is certain that the State government will ensure that the accused are punished in accordance with the law," the Chief Minister concluded.



## HEALTH CONCERN IN FAMILY OF BANDI SANJAY KUMAR

**KARIMNAGAR:** Shakuntala, the mother of Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar, reportedly suffered a heart attack. Family members rushed her to Hyderabad for emergency medical treatment. She is currently undergoing treatment at Medicover Hospitals. According to reports, Doctors at the hospital performed an emergency stent procedure on her heart. Medical teams are closely monitoring her condition. Bandi Sanjay Kumar also reached the hospital and enquired about his mother's health condition with the doctors and family members.

# "We Will Stand by the Victims

**POCSO Case Investigation is Continuing": Chief Minister Revanth Reddy**

**HYDERABAD**

The Chief Minister stated that a case was initially registered on the 8th based on a complaint filed by the girl's mother. Subsequently, due to the Prime Minister's visit, the police were engaged in security arrangements. On the 11th, the police again recorded the statement of the girl and registered a case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act). He clarified that the POC SO case was registered only after recording the minor girl's statement. "For us, everyone is equal. It is my responsibility to ensure that the offender is punished," the Chief Minister said. He explained that the case was registered based on the statement of the minor girl, which holds greater importance than the

mother's complaint. The Chief Minister asserted that the government was not neglecting the case in any way. Referring to criticism from political opponents, he questioned whether Bandi Sanjay Kumar himself should be arrested merely because a case had been registered against his son. He also criticized R. S. Praveen Kumar, saying that he was speaking without knowing the facts and alleging that although he once claimed to fight against feudal forces, he was now working for them.

The Chief Minister stated that the girl's certificates and other evidence had been collected, and assured that action would be taken if evidence was found. He added that unlike the way former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao had allegedly filed cases against him in haste, his government would not take rushed decisions. "Whether it is Bandi Sanjay or anyone else, we will ensure justice for the victims," the Chief Minister emphasized.



# CM Receives "Cancer Atlas of Telangana" from Dr. Nori Dattatreya

**HYDERABAD**

Government advisor and eminent cancer specialist Nori Dattatreya met Chief Minister Revanth Reddy at his Jubilee Hills residence and presented the "Cancer Atlas of Telangana". The meeting was attended by Health Minister Damodar Raja Narasimha, MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, CMO Principal Secretary Srinivasa Raju, and State Health Secretary Christina Z. Chongthu.

The Chief Minister appreciated Dr. Nori Dattatreya for preparing a comprehensive report on cancer prevalence in Telangana. He said the Cancer Atlas would be highly useful in

the fight against cancer in the state. He noted that the report would help identify regions with higher cancer incidence and enable investigation into possible causes.

Based on the data provided in the report, the government may set up special screening centres in high-risk areas, he said. The Chief Minister also stated that cancer treatment facilities would not be limited to Hyderabad alone, and special hospitals would be established in regions with a higher number of cancer cases. He further suggested strengthening cancer treatment under Aarogyasri Scheme to ensure more effective treatment in corporate hospitals.

# Global Platform for Rural Artisans: KTR Launches 'Aaharyas' Website

**MALKAJGIRI**

With the aim of connecting rural artisans and self-employed individuals to the international market, K. T. Rama Rao launched the official website of the "Aaharyas" e-commerce platform. The platform has been developed by a young team led by entrepreneur Avani Reddy. It is designed to bring traditional products made by rural artisans and craftsmen to the global marketplace.

The organizers stated that the primary objective of "Aaharyas" is to connect artisans directly with international customers without intermediaries, thereby ensuring them a stable and fair income.

The platform aims to promote Indian cultural heritage and traditional arts on a global scale. It also focuses on strengthening livelihoods, promoting handicrafts, and showcasing rural talent to the world.



Speaking on the occasion, KTR said that immense creativity and skill exist in India's rural areas, and it is commendable that technology is being used to provide global opportunities to such talent.

He appreciated the initiative of young entrepreneurs who are working with social responsibility to strengthen the rural economy. Organizers expressed confidence that the launch of "Aaharyas" would mark a significant milestone in giving international recognition to rural artisan products.

# Government Committed to Strengthening the Cooperative Sector: Chief Secretary

**A** State Level Cooperative Development Committee (SCDC) meeting was held in Hyderabad under the chairmanship of Telangana Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao, IAS. The meeting was attended by Union Ministry of Cooperation Secretary Dr. Ashish Kumar Bhutani, Additional Secretary Siddharth Jain, Director Sathya, and senior officials from both the Central and State Governments.

During the meeting, State Cooperation Department Secretary Surendra Mohan explained the various initiatives undertaken by the Telangana Government for the development of the cooperative sector. He stated that the sector was

being strengthened through a "Whole of Government Approach" in coordination with the Union Ministry of Cooperation.

## Telangana Leads in PACS Computerization

He said that the Telangana Government had successfully implemented the PACS computerization program and completed audits within the stipulated time. This had resulted in several benefits, including transparency in transactions, digitization of voter lists, and expansion of both credit and non-credit businesses. He requested the Central Government to release the pending funds related to the scheme.

## World's Largest Grain Storage Plan

Under the World's Largest Grain Storage Plan (WLGSP), Telangana has set a target of creating storage capacity of 3 lakh metric tonnes across 10 districts. He stated that 34 locations — including 17 PACS and 17 units of Telangana State Cooperative Marketing Federation Limited — had already been identified, and plans had been prepared for the construction of warehouses with a total capacity of 1.4 lakh metric tonnes.

## Introducing Youth to the Cooperative Sector

Following the guidance of Agriculture Minister Tummalapalli Nageswara Rao, the state implemented a Cooperative



Internship Programme to increase awareness among youth about the cooperative sector. Around 150 students were provided direct exposure to the functioning of cooperative institutions. He also mentioned that cooperative clubs were being established to encourage youth participation in community development. **Formulation of Telangana**

## Cooperative Policy

In line with the "Telangana Rising 2047" vision, the minister suggested preparing a state cooperative policy in collaboration with National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). Accordingly, proposals such as e-court facilities, artificial intelligence-based governance, and the establishment of a Telangana Cooperative Academy were discussed.

## Warehouses, Banking, Solar Energy, and FPOs

He stated that an action plan had been prepared for the construction of large warehouses considering procurement of paddy, maize, and other crops in the state. Banking initiatives

undertaken through District Cooperative Central Banks (DCCBs), Telangana State Cooperative Apex Bank Limited, and urban cooperative banks were also explained.

He added that electric vehicle charging stations and solar power projects were being set up through cooperative societies. Further, 31 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in the state were engaged in new business activities.

The SCDC committee was also requested to approve the proposal to expand the existing PACS into Multipurpose PACS. Huge Opportunities for Dairy and Fisheries Cooperatives in Telangana Union Ministry of Cooperation Additional Secretary Siddharth Jain stated that

Telangana has immense potential for expanding dairy and fisheries cooperative societies. He suggested identifying strategic reservoirs and strengthening fisheries cooperatives to improve the livelihoods of fishermen. PACS Participation in Warehouse Construction Should Increase

Union Ministry of Cooperation Secretary Dr. Ashish Kumar Bhutani highlighted the importance of the World's Largest Grain Storage Plan. He stated that the Food Corporation of India (FCI) had identified areas where storage infrastructure was needed.

He explained benefits available under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF), including a 3 percent interest

## Cooperative Sector Key to Inclusive Development

Addressing the meeting, Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao recalled that the cooperative movement has a rich history dating back to the days of united Andhra Pradesh. He said that the establishment of a dedicated Union Ministry of Cooperation and the initiatives.

# Andhra Pradesh is set to emerge as a strong defence shield for the nation:CM

**Union Minister Rajnath Singh and Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu lays foundation for AMCA project in Puttaparthi**  
**Andhra Pradesh is poised to become a major centre for gold production in the coming years: CM**  
**AP today stands for Advanced Pradesh: Rajnath Singh**

## PUTTAPARTHI:

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu said Andhra Pradesh is set to emerge as a strong defence shield for the nation through the establishment of multiple defence manufacturing units, including the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) project. He stated that the AMCA initiative, led by the Aeronautical Development Agency would significantly contribute to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

The Chief Minister, along with Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, laid foundation stones for the AMCA project and other defence sector initiatives in Puttaparthi in Sri Sathya Sai district. The leaders unveiled the plaque for the AMCA Integration and Flight Testing Project to be developed under the ADA, a wing of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). They also laid foundation stones for defence manufacturing units including Agneyastra Energetics under Kalyani Strategic Systems, along with facilities by Bharat Dynamics Limited and HFCL. Additionally, five drone man-



ufacturing and technology companies planned for the Drone City at Orvakal were virtually inaugurated.

Later addressing the gathering, Chief Minister Chandrababu said Rayalaseema is no more a drought zone and it's emerging as growth zone. Now, with the arrival of the AMCA project Puttaparthi will become a strategic defence hub of national importance. He noted that the project aligns with India's push to modernize and strengthen defence capabilities and highlighted the Centre's focus on developing next-generation stealth fighter aircraft. Referring to Operation Sindoor, he said the drones used in the operation were manufactured and tested in Andhra Pradesh,

showcasing the state's defence potential.

The Chief Minister thanked Rajnath Singh for allocating the AMCA project to Andhra Pradesh and said the project would bring investments exceeding Rs 15,000 crore and generate 7,500 jobs. Puttaparthi, he said, would evolve into a key centre for fighter jet integration and flight testing.

The Chief Minister highlighted the speed at which the project moved forward as the foundation for this project laid in just 36 days. Approvals were granted at jet speed. He added that several other defence-related projects are also being launched, including units by Bharat Forge, HFCL, Bharat Dynamics Limited and drone city initiatives in Kur-

nool district.

Emphasizing the growing importance of drones in modern warfare and civilian applications such as agriculture, he said the coalition government decided to establish a dedicated drone manufacturing ecosystem at Orvakal.

The CM outlined Andhra Pradesh's emerging strategic ecosystem including

- Sriharikota as a centre for space power
- Nagayalanka for missile capabilities
- Puttaparthi for defence strength
- Visakhapatnam as a naval hub

Together, he said, these developments would transform Andhra Pradesh into a "defence shield for the nation."

He also reiterated plans to transform Rayalaseema into a hub for steel, cement, solar, wind, pumped storage, defence, aerospace, electronics and space-related industries.

The Chief Minister announced that gold production would soon begin at the Jonnagiri Gold Fields (JGF) in Kurnool district and added that 600 kg of gold will be produced this year, 1,500 kg annually from the second year onward. He said Andhra

Pradesh is poised to become a major centre for gold production in the coming years. Referring to geopolitical tensions in West Asia, Chandrababu said rising imports of fuel and gold are putting pressure on India's foreign exchange reserves. He urged citizens to adopt Prime Minister Modi's seven-point savings agenda, adding that the Andhra Pradesh government had already begun reducing convoy vehicles and introducing cost-saving measures. He also encouraged wider adoption of work-from-home practices and called upon citizens to convert present challenges into opportunities.

Speaking on the occasion Defence Minister Rajnath Singh described the AMCA project as a historic milestone for India's defence sector and praised Andhra Pradesh for attracting global technology and defence investments by describing AP today stands for Advanced Pradesh. He said Rayalaseema, where fifth-generation stealth fighter aircraft would be developed, should evolve into a military-industrial complex. The Rs 15,000-crore project would include not just aircraft integration but also an

advanced flight testing centre, placing India among a select group of countries with such capabilities. He also noted that Bharat Dynamics Limited would invest Rs 480 crore in manufacturing advanced autonomous underwater systems and torpedoes, reducing India's dependence on imports. In the presence of Rajnath Singh and Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, seven companies signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) involving investments worth Rs 4,460 crore creating employment opportunities for 6,400 youth. The companies include:

- Bharat Forge, Raghuvanshi Machine Tool,
- Sagar Defence Engineering, NIBE Group,
- PMT Defence, Chakravyuh Dynamics and
- Indus Bridge Ventures.

Before the foundation ceremony, the Defence Minister and Chief Minister viewed displays of AMCA models, missiles, torpedoes, grenades and advanced defence systems showcased by participating firms. Minister Nara Lokesh, Union Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu, BJP AP President PVN Madhav and others participated.

## AP Chief Secretary Sai Prasad's Tenure Extended Until November 30

AMARAVATI, MAY 15:

The Central Government has extended the tenure of Andhra Pradesh Chief Secretary G. Sai Prasad by another six months, from June 1 to November 30.

The extension was approved by the Central Government following a request from the State Government. In accordance with Rule 16(t) of the All India Services (Death-cum-Retirement Benefits) Rules, 1958, the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), conveyed the approval through a letter issued by Under Secretary Rajesh Kumar Yadav to the Principal Secretary of the State General Admin-



istration Department (Political). Sai Prasad, who is currently serving as the Chief Secretary, was originally scheduled to retire at the end of this month. However, with the intention of continuing to utilize his services for some more time, the State Government sent proposals to the Centre seeking an extension of his tenure. Accordingly, the Central Government issued orders extending his tenure for six months, from June 1 to November 30.



## Karnataka bus operators to increase fares up to 30% after fuel price hike

Private bus operators in Karnataka have announced a 20-30 per cent fare hike from Friday midnight after fuel prices rose. The association says higher road tax, the Shakti scheme and the latest fuel increase have worsened pressure on operators.

Karnataka High Court warns transport unions, bars bus strike till August 7, talks between unions and Siddaramaiah remain deadlocked. Private bus operators in Karnataka have announced a 20-30 per cent fare hike in the wake of the hike in fuel prices, private bus operators have decided to increase fares by 20-30 per cent, depending on the route, effective from Friday midnight. They have also called for government subsidies, a reduction in cess, and lower road taxes to improve the situation. "The situation for bus owners in the state is already distressing due to high road tax and the impact of the Shakti scheme (free bus travel for women in government buses). On top of this, fuel prices have increased," Karnataka State Bus Owners' Association President S Na-

tara Sharma said. "This will impose a burden of Rs 15,000 per vehicle per month on bus owners. If an owner has three buses, the burden will be Rs 45,000 to Rs 50,000 per month," he added. Speaking to reporters, he said the situation has made it inevitable for owners to increase fares by 20-30 per cent, depending on the route, under current conditions. The increase may be roughly Rs 200 per seat, he added. "For example, the current bus fare from Bengaluru to Belagavi is around Rs 1,000-Rs 1,200, which is likely to rise to Rs 1,350-Rs 1,400. Similarly, fares from Bengaluru to Mangaluru or Udupi currently range from Rs 900-Rs 1,000 and are expected to go up to Rs 1,100-Rs 1,200," he said. Petrol and diesel prices were each hiked by Rs 3 per litre on Friday, the first rate increase in more than four years, amid mounting losses for fuel retailers due to surging global crude prices in the wake of the West Asia conflict. The increase comes a couple of weeks after the Assembly elections concluded in Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Puducherry.



## Former IAS Officer B.V. Rama Rao Passes Away

Condolences Pour In from Eminent Personalities  
HYDERABAD, MAY 15:

Senior retired IAS officer B. V. Rama Rao of the Andhra Pradesh cadre passed away on Thursday morning at the age of 86 due to illness at his son's residence in Bengaluru. Belonging to the 1962 batch, he rendered distinguished services in various capacities both at the Centre and in the erstwhile united Andhra Pradesh state.

### Distinguished Service in Top Positions

During his long administrative career, B.V. Rama Rao served as Secretary of the Education Department, Managing Director of Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC), and Principal Secretary of the Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department. He later retired as Special Chief Secretary of the Medical, Health and Family Welfare Department. He also served as the Acting Chief Secretary of the erstwhile united Andhra Pradesh state.

### Significant Contribution to Education

Even after retiring from government service, he remained active in public life. Driven by his passion for education and public policy, he served as Dean of the ICAFI School of Public Policy, where he guided and inspired future generations. He earned recognition as a dedicated administrator and academician.

### Family Background

Rama Rao is survived by his wife and three sons. Several IAS officers, prominent personalities, and educationists expressed deep condolences over his demise. They prayed for peace to his soul and conveyed their sympathies to his family members.

# Membership is Not Just a Number, But a Dedicated Force

Nadendla Manohar  
HYDERABAD, MAY 15:

At the Jana Sena "Udyami Aatmiya Samavesham" held in Mangalagiri, Nadendla Manohar, Chairman of the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) and State Civil Supplies Minister, said that membership in the Jana Sena Party is not merely a numerical figure but a committed force carrying the ideals and ideology of party chief Pawan Kalyan.

### From 150 Members to 22 Lakh Supporters

Manohar stated that: The party began its political journey with just 150 members. Today, the membership has grown to nearly 22 lakh members across the state.

He explained the growth of the membership drive: In 2020, 4,748 volunteers enrolled 94,024 members.

Despite COVID challenges, membership reached 3.27 lakh in 2022. It increased to 5.5 lakh in 2023 and 12



lakh in 2024. Currently, total membership stands at around 21.5 lakh. He said the party's decade-long struggle and its "100% strike rate" in the recent elections transformed Jana Sena from a registered political party into a recognized regional party.

### Tribute to Deceased Party Workers

Manohar expressed grief over the deaths of 1,034 Jana Sainiks and Veera Mahilas since the membership program began. He said party chief Pawan Kalyan stood by the affected families and ex-



tended financial support of approximately ₹46.35 crore. The party has also taken responsibility for the education of the children of deceased party workers.

### Politics Based on Public Issues

Manohar said Jana Sena has always stayed away from selfish politics and has consistently focused on people's issues.

### According to him:

The party fought for farmers, road infrastructure, and public welfare. Jana Sena's politics are based on honest-

ty, values, and public interest rather than opportunism. He also urged party workers not to react emotionally to social media campaigns or internal misunderstandings and emphasized that the party has only one leader - Pawan Kalyan.

### Strengthening the Party Ahead of Local Elections

Manohar called upcoming municipal and local body elections a major opportunity to strengthen leadership at the grassroots level.

### He urged party workers to:

welcome new members wholeheartedly, strengthen the party in all 175 constituencies, work collectively under alliance decisions, and focus on discipline and organizational growth. He recalled how Jana Sena workers bravely contested local elections despite pressure and alleged cases filed against them, eventually winning positions as sarpanches, MPTCs, and ZPTCs.

## Vijay invited to Kerala CM-designate VD Satheesan's oath event

On Thursday, May 14, VD Satheesan was named by the party high command as the leader of the Congress Legislature Party in Kerala. His oath-taking ceremony as CM is set to be held on May 18.



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay has been invited to the oath-taking ceremony of Kerala's CM-designate VD Satheesan, sources within the Congress party said on Friday. Notably, the Congress's support proved crucial in the formation of Vijay's government after his party, the TVK, fell short of the majority mark by 10 seats in the Assembly elections held in Tamil Nadu last month.

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi had attended the leader's swearing-in ceremony in Chennai last week. The Congress is now set to lead a coalition government in Kerala. On Thursday, May 14, Satheesan was named by

the party high command as the leader of the Congress Legislature Party in Kerala. His oath-taking ceremony as CM is set to be held on May 18. Further details about the event will be formally announced once the number of attendees are finalised, Congress sources said. Invitation has also been extended to senior Congress leader and CM of Kerala's neighbouring Karnataka, Siddaramaiah, they added.

### CONGRESS-TVK BONHOMIE

Satheesan's oath-taking is slated to take place just over a week after Vijay was sworn in as Tamil Nadu's CM on May 10.

The Governor's nod for government formation in Tamil Nadu could only be obtained after the actor-turned-politician managed to secure the support from the Congress (5), the Indian Union Muslim League (2), Communist Party of India (2), Communist Party of India (Marxist) (2) and Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi (2) for a post-poll alliance. Shortly after his swearing-in in Chennai, Vijay shot a selfie video with his ministers and Rahul Gandhi, before turning the camera to include the sea of his supporters in the frame.

### THAROOR TO SKIP SATHEESAN'S OATH

## NEET case-accused Rajasthan family's 5 MBBS students vanish from colleges

Several members of the Rajasthan-based Biwal family have reportedly gone missing after three relatives were arrested in the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak case. Investigators suspect the arrests may open up a wider network involving leaked papers, coaching links and earlier medical entrance exams.

Several members of the Rajasthan family accused in the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak case have reportedly gone missing after the arrest of three relatives - Dinesh Biwal, Mangil Biwal and Vikas Biwal - by the Central Bureau of Investigation, escalating the probe into what investigators suspect is a wider examination leak network operating across multiple years. According to sources, multiple children from the Biwal family, all studying in government medical colleges after clearing NEET in recent years, have left their campuses and are currently



untraceable. Those reportedly missing include Palak, a student at SMS Medical College Jaipur, Pragati from Dausa Medical College, Sonia from a medical college in Mumbai and Gunjan from Banaras Medical College. Vikas Biwal, another family member linked to Sawai Madhopur Medical College, had earlier been arrested in the case. The development comes as the CBI continues its investigation into the alleged leak of the NEET-UG 2026 question paper. Three members of the family have already been arrested for their alleged involvement in the racket. Investigators suspect the family

not only procured leaked papers for their own children but also sold them further through coaching institute networks in Rajasthan's Sikar district, a major coaching hub for medical aspirants. During searches at the family's residence in Jamwa Ramgarh near Jaipur, investigators reportedly recovered several documents and digital evidence linked to the alleged paper leak operation. The probe has also revealed that this year's leaked NEET paper was allegedly purchased for Dinesh Biwal's son, Rishi, a Class 12 student at Janaki Public School in Natata village.

EDITORIAL

THE PRICE OF DELAYED CANDOR:  
THE POLITICAL GAPS IN THE PM'S  
WEST ASIA CRISIS STRATEGY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's seven-point call to action for the citizens of India lays bare the severity of the impact of the West Asia crisis. Further, apart from its implications, Mr. Modi's message is problematic for two other key reasons: its timing and content. A key part of his message was to urge people to work from home and reduce their fuel usage. A more effective approach might have been to lead by example. Yet, Mr. Modi's message comes days after he and his Cabinet colleagues flew all over the country and organised roadshows to campaign for the recent elections. Neither did any of his pre-election speeches mention these issues. His message also comes on the back of daily reassurances by his government's officials that there was nothing to worry. Clearly, there is. The Prime Minister's message also follows various Ministers' attempts to heap praise on him for not raising petrol and diesel prices. A decision not to further burden the common man is welcome, but the flip side is that it fails to impress upon them the need to curtail consumption. The government took that strategic call before the elections, and is now trying to dilute it. Perhaps a hike in fuel prices will follow soon. The Prime Minister's speech also coincided with a similar call to action for Indian corporates by the Confederation of Indian Industry. This kind of coordinated messaging points to a dire situation. Several of the Prime Minister's suggestions might also have other negative impacts that could be more serious than the problems they are trying to address. Some others might simply not be as effective as he hopes.

If farmers stop using chemical fertilizers, as he has urged, the immediate impact will be on crop output at a time when El Niño is already set to hurt it. High-frequency indicators are already revealing the economic damage of the West Asia crisis. This will only exacerbate the situation. The suggestion to stop foreign travel will conserve foreign exchange, but Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data up to February 2026 shows that Indians' foreign travel spending in 2025-26 was already down by 3%. March, the first month after the Iran war broke out, is likely to have seen an even sharper decline. The real pressure on the rupee and India's foreign exchange is because foreign institutional investors are pulling out while the RBI is using valuable dollars to shore up the falling currency. Urging Indians to buy local is another way of asking them to consume less, since purely domestic supply is not nearly enough to cater to the demand. Asking them to buy less gold is also likely to be futile. All this means that the economy is in for a hard time over the next few months — a warning the Prime Minister should have delivered much earlier, elections or no elections.

Syngas and India's Energy Future: Security Without Sustainability Is Not Enough

Every rupee increase at a petrol station carries the weight of a larger international story. Whether it is rising tensions in the Middle East or the prolonged Russia-Ukraine war, fluctuations in global crude oil prices eventually reach ordinary households. The impact is not first felt in diplomatic circles or stock markets, but in kitchen budgets, transport costs, and farming expenses. When LPG cylinder prices rise, when diesel becomes costlier, or when a farmer struggles to afford fuel for a tractor, India is reminded of a difficult truth: eco-

nomics are not merely about wealth — it is also about energy security. Traditionally, coal in India has been associated with thermal power plants and pollution. But modern technology is attempting to redefine its role. Instead of directly burning coal, it can be subjected to a chemical process under high temperatures with limited oxygen, producing a mixture of gases such as carbon monoxide and hydrogen. This mixture is called synthetic gas, or "syngas."

From Coal to Syngas: It is in this context that coal gasification and "syngas" have emerged as important strategic discussions.

its energy future using its own resources? India possesses the world's fourth-largest coal reserves. For decades, these reserves were used mainly for electricity generation. But rising energy demand and growing dependence on foreign oil are forcing policymakers to explore alternatives. Countries such as China, the United States, and South Africa have already invested heavily in coal gasification technologies. China has integrated coal gasification into its fertilizer sector to reduce dependence on imported natural gas, while the United States continues to experiment with cleaner coal technologies and carbon management systems. India is now studying these experiences as it searches for greater energy self-reliance. Recognising the strategic importance of this sector, the Indian government has approved a ₹37,500 crore incentive package for coal gasification projects and set a target of gasifying 100 million tonnes of coal by 2030. This is not merely another industrial policy announcement. It is an attempt to build a protective shield for an economy that becomes fragile whenever global crude oil prices rise sharply. If implemented effectively, syngas production could reduce import pressure, strengthen fertilizer production, and provide greater stability to domestic energy markets.

The Environmental Question Cannot Be Ignored: Yet every solution carries risks. Coal gasification still generates carbon emissions, and the process requires substantial quantities of water. At a time when climate change is intensifying heatwaves, water scarcity, and environmental stress across India, these concerns cannot be dismissed lightly. Globally, technologies such as Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS) are being explored to trap emissions before they enter the atmosphere. Water recycling systems are also being developed to reduce industrial water consumption. But technology alone cannot guarantee sustainability. Without strict environmental safeguards, transparency, and accountability, the long-term costs may outweigh the short-term benefits. Critics argue

that discussing coal at a time when the world is rapidly shifting toward renewable energy represents a step backward. However, India's developmental realities differ significantly from those of many developed nations. The country still faces the enormous challenge of providing affordable and uninterrupted energy to a vast population while sustaining industrial growth. That is precisely why India's challenge is more complex than a simple choice between coal and renewables. The real challenge lies in balancing energy security with environmental responsibility.

India's Future Depends on Responsible Choices:

Syngas is more than an alternative fuel. It reflects the difficult choices India must make in the coming decades — between development and sustainability, between energy independence and ecological responsibility. Coal once powered the Industrial Revolution. Whether it can now strengthen India's economic security without creating new environmental crises depends entirely on policy vision and responsible execution. Massive investments alone will not guarantee success. Transparent implementation, modern pollution-control systems, water management, and continuous environmental monitoring are equally essential. Otherwise, a resource seen today as a strategic asset could become tomorrow's ecological burden.

Ultimately, this debate returns to the kitchen budget of an ordinary Indian family. Energy security cannot come at the cost of environmental collapse. India's future does not lie merely beneath its coal reserves, but in how wisely and responsibly those resources are used.



nomics is not merely about wealth — it is also about energy security.

India's Vulnerable Energy Reality:

India is among the world's fastest-growing economies, yet it remains deeply dependent on imported fuel. Nearly 85 percent of the country's crude oil requirement and around half of its natural gas needs are met through imports. India imports more than five million barrels of crude oil every day, spending massive amounts of foreign exchange annually to sustain its energy demands.

This dependence makes the Indian economy highly vulnerable to global instability. A disruption in oil-producing regions immediately increases transportation costs, pushes up inflation, and affects the prices of everything from vegetables to cement. The burden of geopolitical uncertainty is eventually carried

Traditionally, coal in India has been associated with thermal power plants and pollution. But modern technology is attempting to redefine its role. Instead of directly burning coal, it can be subjected to a chemical process under high temperatures with limited oxygen, producing a mixture of gases such as carbon monoxide and hydrogen. This mixture is called synthetic gas, or "syngas."

Syngas can be used in electricity generation, fertilizer production, chemicals, and industrial manufacturing. More importantly, it offers India an opportunity to reduce dependence on imported fuel by utilizing domestic resources more effectively.

Beyond Technology: A Strategic Imperative

Coal gasification is not merely a scientific experiment. It is part of a larger economic and strategic question: how can India secure



KINJARAPU AMARAVATHI  
Member, PLUS NGO

EDUCATION —  
THE LOST LAMP OF HUMANITY

Education... once a sacred river flowing through the soul of civilization today, too often, a marketplace of marks where childhood is weighed against numbers. Once, learning bloomed beneath oil lamps and open skies, in grandmother's timeless tales, in the thunder of epics, in the fragrance of culture that lingered within every home. A child was not taught merely how to earn but how to live with honor. Letters carried ethics. Stories carried sacrifice. Knowledge walked hand in hand with kindness. The teacher then was not a factory of formulas, but a sculptor of souls. Before sharpening the mind, he softened the heart. Before teaching ambition, he taught humility. Children learned that truth was greater than triumph, that compassion outweighed competition, that character was higher than success. Education then was not the burden of memory it was the awakening of humanity. But today... Tiny shoulders bend beneath mountains of books. Young minds overflow with equations, yet hearts starve for empathy. Classrooms roar with competition, while kindness fades in silence. Children know the speed of light, yet not the value of tears. They solve impossible formulas, yet fail to heal human pain. Report cards glitter relationships crumble. Ranks rise respect falls. What greatness is this? What use is education

if brilliance breeds arrogance? What worth are medals if morality disappears? What victory is success when humanity itself is defeated? Machines can calculate faster than man. Artificial minds can store endless knowledge. But only true education can awaken conscience. The world today does not merely need builders of technology it needs guardians of humanity. Teach children how to stand beside the weak, how to speak without cruelty, how to rise without crushing others, how to carry tradition without losing compassion. Let classrooms bloom again with moral stories, with the wisdom of ancestors, with the music of mercy, with the fragrance of culture. Let education become not a race for ranks, but a journey toward wisdom. For knowledge without values is fire without control power without morality is darkness wearing a crown. O Education! Return to your forgotten throne. Be once more the lamp that removes ignorance, not merely the ladder to employment. Be the rain that softens hearts, not the storm that hardens souls. Create scholars, yes but first create humans. For when culture breathes through learning, when wisdom walks beside humility, when knowledge bows before humanity only then will education become sacred again. And only then will the future not merely be intelligent... but enlightened.

...: Dr. Peruka Raju ...  
7810032847

That Is Why We Must Read...

Human beings develop reading habits in different ways across different regions of the world. Social conditions, cultural backgrounds, educational opportunities, and living environments greatly influence the way people think and learn. When we observe several international studies and reports published by newspapers and survey organizations across the globe, one interesting fact becomes clear: despite differences in lifestyle and economic conditions, people in many countries continue to value reading as an important part of life.

Reading Opens Countless Pathways

Books play a crucial role in the intellectual and emotional growth of human beings. Reading strengthens imagination, improves knowledge, and encourages innovation. In today's fast-moving world, the amount of time people spend reading differs widely from country to country, depending on social structures, educational systems, and cultural priorities. Several international observations and reading surveys reveal fascinating details about the nations where people spend the most time reading every week. India stands in the first position, with an average person spending nearly 10 hours and 42 minutes per week reading. This remarkable achievement reflects the country's rich literary and intellectual culture. Reading is deeply connected with education, spirituality, social awareness, politics, and literature in India. Across all age groups, reading continues to remain both a popular leisure activity and an important academic practice. The availability of books, digital libraries, online platforms, and reading applications has significantly increased reading habits among Indian citizens. In the present generation, social media and digital technology, instead of completely replacing books, have also created new ways for readers to access knowledge. Thailand occupies the second position, with people spending an average of 9 hours and 24 minutes reading every week. In Thai society, reading is viewed not only as a source of knowledge but also as a form of personal growth and entertainment. Public libraries and



nationwide reading campaigns have encouraged people to cultivate reading habits. The growth of digital media has further expanded access to reading materials for the younger generation.

China records approximately 8 hours of reading per week per individual. The Chinese government has actively promoted reading through public libraries, educational programs, and nationwide reading initiatives. Reading is considered an essential tool for personal and professional development. Students, professionals, and working individuals dedicate time to reading despite busy schedules. The increasing popularity of e-books and online reading platforms has strengthened reading culture across the country.

In the Philippines, people spend nearly 7 hours and 36 minutes every week reading. Literature and education occupy an important place in Filipino society. Schools, universities, and public libraries continuously encourage reading habits among students and citizens. Affordable books and digital reading trends have contributed to the steady growth of reading culture in the country.

Egypt follows closely, with an average reading time of 7 hours and 30 minutes per week. Reading has deep roots in Egyptian cultural history, which is enriched by great literary traditions. Government institutions and cultural organizations regularly conduct book fairs and reading campaigns to encourage people to read more. Even in the face of economic challenges, many Egyptians continue to value books as tools for self-improvement and intellectual empowerment.

The Czech Republic records around 7 hours and 24 minutes of reading ev-

ery week. Reading is widely regarded as one of the most enjoyable leisure activities in Czech society. The country has a long-standing literary tradition and a high literacy rate. Public libraries are easily accessible, while reading is strongly integrated into school education. Literary festivals and book clubs further contribute to a vibrant reading culture.

In Russia, people spend approximately 7 hours and 6 minutes per week reading. Russia has always been recognized for its extraordinary literary heritage and globally celebrated authors. Public libraries and bookstores remain highly popular. Russian readers continue to show strong interest in both classical and contemporary literature. Digital reading platforms have also expanded access to books in modern times.

Sweden records an average weekly reading time of 6 hours and 54 minutes. Education and intellectual development are highly valued in Swedish society. Well-maintained public libraries and strong school reading programs encourage consistent reading habits. Audiobooks and e-books have become increasingly popular among Swedish readers.

France also averages around 6 hours and 54 minutes of weekly reading. The country possesses a long and respected literary tradition. Readers show equal interest in fiction and non-fiction works. Government-supported literary festivals, book fairs, and public cultural programs continue to strengthen reading culture across France.

Hungary completes the list, with people spending approximately 6 hours and 48 minutes reading every week. Book clubs, literary gatherings, and cultural programs remain popular among Hungarian citizens, helping preserve the nation's strong literary spirit.

Benefits of Reading

Reading improves concentration and strengthens the ability to focus deeply on a subject. It helps individuals understand complex ideas with patience and clarity.

It also improves language skills and communication abilities. Readers encounter new vocabulary, expressions, and ideas, which naturally enhance

speaking and writing skills.

Books introduce readers to entirely new worlds. Writers often share their experiences, observations, and wisdom through literature, helping readers understand the past, present, and future from broader perspectives.

Many books inspire and transform lives. Stories of struggle, perseverance, and achievement provide emotional strength and motivation to countless readers.

Reading also reduces stress and provides mental satisfaction. Life is never free from difficulties, but books often guide people toward solutions, emotional balance, and inner peace.

For many individuals, books become guiding lights. Several successful films and web series today originated from great novels and literary works. When parents develop reading habits, children are naturally encouraged to follow the same path.

Reading before sleep can also improve sleeping patterns. Unlike excessive television or mobile phone usage, books help the mind relax and prepare for rest.

Most importantly, reading keeps the brain active and healthy. Intellectual engagement improves memory, increases comprehension, and may even reduce the risk of cognitive decline in later years.

Ultimately, book reading enriches human intelligence, broadens vision, and encourages innovation and emotional fulfillment. In a rapidly changing world, cultivating the habit of reading remains one of the greatest investments a person can make for lifelong growth and wisdom.



CHITIKENA KIRAN KUMAR

Social and Political Analyst Member, IBRF

## Women and Children are the Foundation of Society, Empowering Them is Government's Priority: CM Nayab Singh Saini

### Chief Minister Reviews Five-Year Action Plan of Women and Child Development Department

CHANDIGARH, MAY 15

Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that women and children form the foundation of any society and nation, and no country can become strong without empowering them. He said that empowering women and children is among the top priorities of the Haryana Government and the Women and Child Development Department should prepare its next five-year action plan keeping this objective in mind.

The Chief Minister gave these directions while reviewing the upcoming five-year action plan of the Women and Child Development Department under Haryana Vision-2047. He said that the Haryana Government aims to build an inclusive and equitable society where women have

the right to live with dignity, remain free from violence, and where every child is nurtured in a safe, healthy and supportive environment with full opportunities for growth and development. The Chief Minister directed the department to introduce various activities for children to assess whether they are achieving age-appropriate physical and mental milestones. He said that baby shows and health competitions should be organised for children of every age group and winning children should also be rewarded. Representatives from society, families and the government should also be involved in such programmes. He said these activities would create awareness among mothers regarding children's health. He further stated that the first six years of a child's life are extremely important as



their entire future depends on this stage.

Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that an ideal family and a healthy society cannot be imagined without women's education, health and awareness, because the physical and mental well-being of children also depends upon mothers. Therefore, strategies to create greater awareness among women should also be included in the department's future action plan. To provide a supportive environment and empower women, working women hos-

tels and crèche centres for their children should be established in every district.

The Chief Minister said that the Women and Child Development Department should prepare a special awareness campaign across the state to improve the birth rate of girls. He directed the department to set a target of taking Haryana's sex ratio above the national average of 933 and prepare a concrete action plan to achieve it. He also directed the department to increase the target for anaemia screening among

women and children and provide supplements as required. He further issued directions regarding providing special nutritional support to children up to three years of age and lactating mothers.

Sh. Nayab Singh Saini said that a district-wise Women Empowerment Index should be prepared in Haryana to identify districts where facilities for women need to be enhanced. He added that Anganwadi workers and helpers should be given special training to effectively spread awareness among women.

Commissioner and Secretary of the Women and Child Development Department, Sh. Shekhar Vidyarthi, informed that at present 25,962 Anganwadi centres are operational across the state. He said that Anganwadi workers and helpers working at these centres

are required to upload various types of information related to women and children online. Therefore, the department is preparing a proposal to enhance their capabilities and provide them with the necessary equipment.

Those present on the occasion included Chief Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Sh. Rajesh Khullar, Chief Secretary Sh. Anurag Rastogi, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Sh. Arun Gupta, Commissioner and Secretary of the Women and Child Development Department Sh. Shekhar Vidyarthi, Director Dr. Priyanka Soni, OSD to the Chief Minister and Director General of Swarna Jayanti Haryana Institute for Fiscal Management Dr. Raj Nehru, Deputy Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Sh. Yashpal Yadav and other officers.



## NFR to Celebrate World Environment Day 2026 with Focus on Climate Change

MALIGAON, 15 MAY, 2026:

Northeast Frontier Railway will observe World Environment Day through a series of awareness programmes and environment protection activities across all its divisions and units from 15th May to 5th June, 2026. The theme for this year's observance will be "Climate Change", highlighting the importance of environmental conservation, sustainable practices and collective responsibility towards protecting the planet for future generations. The observance aims to promote environmental sustainability, cleanliness and conservation awareness among railway employees, passengers and the general public. Various programmes including plantation drives, cleanliness campaigns, awareness rallies, seminars and eco-friendly initiatives will be organized throughout the NFR network during the period. Special emphasis will be laid on reducing

plastic usage, maintaining cleanliness at railway stations and colonies, water conservation and promotion of green practices in railway operations. Railway officials, staff members, students and social organizations are expected to actively participate in the campaign. As part of the celebrations, mass tree plantation drives will be conducted at stations, railway colonies, offices, workshops and other railway premises to enhance green cover and encourage environmental responsibility. Northeast Frontier Railway has consistently undertaken various eco-friendly measures and remains committed towards sustainable and environment-friendly railway operations in the Northeast region. The observance will culminate on World Environment Day on 5th June, 2026 with special programmes, awareness activities and administration of an environmental pledge across all divisions of NFR.

## Strict Measures for Groundwater Conservation: Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy

HYDERABAD, MAY 15:

State Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy stated that the Telangana government is taking stringent measures to protect groundwater resources and ensure drinking water security for the people.

He said the government is giving special attention to problematic issues such as fluoride and nitrate contamination in groundwater.

**Review Meeting on Groundwater Management**

On Friday evening, Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy conducted a special review meeting with officials of the Ground Water Department at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar State Secretariat.

Senior officials, including Irrigation Principal Secretary E. Sridhar, Ground Water Department Director Lakshman, and Deputy Director P. Jyothi Kumar, attended the meeting.

**Focus on Water Conservation**

The minister emphasized that groundwater conservation is a top priority for the state government and in-

structed officials to create awareness among farmers regarding efficient water usage.

**He directed authorities to:**

- prevent wastage of water,
- encourage efficient utilization,
- implement strict groundwater management measures, and
- prepare special action plans to reduce excessive water consumption.

Although groundwater availability has improved in Telangana, water usage has also increased significantly. The minister noted that groundwater utilization rose from 45.93% in 2024 to 46.86% in 2025.

He stressed that groundwater conservation should become a mass movement involving public participation.

**Regulation in High-Usage Areas**

The minister instructed officials to impose stricter controls in regions where groundwater extraction is excessive, keeping future needs in mind.

**He also called for large-scale promotion of:**

- rainwater harvesting systems, and



● construction of recharge pits to improve groundwater recharge.

**Monitoring Infrastructure**

Officials informed the minister that groundwater levels are currently being monitored through:

- 1,771 piezometers,
- 352 observation wells,
- 921 command area observation wells, and
- 64 streamflow checkpoints across the state.

**Increase in Groundwater Recharge**

**According to officials:**

- Annual groundwater recharge increased from 18.44 lakh hectare meters in 2024 to 19.61 lakh hectare meters in 2025, show-

ing an increase of about 1.17 lakh hectare meters.

- At the same time, groundwater usage increased from 8.45 lakh hectare meters to 9.18 lakh hectare meters.

**Revenue Through Groundwater Regulation**

The minister stated that the Ground Water Department is also generating revenue through groundwater regulation.

**Permissions granted for groundwater usage to:**

- industries,
- mining units,
- apartment complexes, and
- packaged drinking water units generated approximately ₹25.80 crore in user charges.

**Concern Over Over-**

**exploited Areas**

Officials revealed that groundwater stress is high in 16 districts of Telangana. In Hyderabad district alone, eight mandals fall under the over-exploited category.

The minister directed officials to officially communicate details of such villages to district administrations and regulate:

- new borewell drilling, and
- additional groundwater extraction in those areas.

**Coordination Among Departments**

The meeting also discussed the need for mandatory consultation with the Ground Water Department before granting permissions for sand mining activities. The minister stressed the importance of coordination among:

- the Ground Water Department,
- Irrigation Department,
- Panchayat Raj Department, and
- Industries Department to improve groundwater levels across the state.

**Use of Technology and AI**

Uttam Kumar Reddy appreciated the Telangana Ground

Water Department for being recognized among the best-performing departments under the National Hydrology Project.

**He directed officials to adopt:**

- modern technology,
- advanced groundwater management systems, and
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) to achieve better results in groundwater conservation and monitoring.

**District-Level Monitoring**

The minister instructed district collectors to regularly conduct meetings of district-level groundwater committees and ensure continuous monitoring of groundwater usage and recharge conditions.

The progress of SC/ST Sub-Plan borewell programs was also reviewed during the meeting, and officials stated that sanctioned borewells had been completed and handed over to beneficiaries.

Finally, the minister directed officials to study successful groundwater conservation models from other states and prepare innovative proposals suitable for Telangana.

## Madhya Pradesh HC order similar to Babri Masjid judgment: Owaisi

HYDERABAD, MAY 15

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIM-IM) President Asaduddin Owaisi said on Friday that Madhya Pradesh High Court order declaring the Bhojshala-Kamal Maula mosque complex as a temple is similar to the Supreme Court judgement in Babri Masjid case. Terming the judgement of the High Court 'erroneous', the Hyderabad MP said that in the Bhojshala dispute case, Muslims had been

overlooked several basic facts. Owaisi told a press conference on Friday that this court judgement has also been delivered on the basis of 'aastha' (belief) like the court ruling in Babri Masjid case. He said that in the Babri Masjid case, the court had said that Muslims did not have possession but in this case the community were in possession till Friday. The Hyderabad MP said that in the Bhojshala dispute case, Muslims had been



offering namaz for 700 years. "I am saying this because it is a Waqf by dedication. Erstwhile state of Dhar had given it to

Muslims and they had been offering namaz," he added. Owaisi recalled that after the Supreme Court judgement in Babri Masjid-Ram Mandir case, he had said it was wrong as the court judgement was delivered on the basis of 'Aastha' and that this will open doors for several similar disputes. He claimed that even the relief given in both the cases are identical. "We consider this judgment erroneous because the Court ignored the 1935

Dhar State Gazette, 1985 Waqf registration, and also ignored the Places of Worship Act," the AIMIM Chief said and hoped that the Supreme Court will take all these facts into consideration and deliver justice. "This judgment is not in accordance with Constitutional values. Even in the Babri Masjid case, the court judgement favoured one religion while ending the right of worship of another. Such judgments have opened the floodgates,

and now anyone can challenge the places of worship, weakening the significance of the Places of Worship Act," Owaisi added. The AIMIM Chief said that in 1935 Dhar State Gazette and Dhar durbar proceedings it was acknowledged that namaz was being offered. In 1951, Director General of ASI had issued orders that only Muslims will offer namaz there and that there will be no rituals of any other religion.

## Delhi Plans Ranikhera Pond Revival Under Hub Project

NEW DELHI: (MAY 15)

The Delhi government has initiated the process to rejuvenate the Ranikhera pond in the city's northwestern parts to pave the way for its multi-level manufacturing hub project, officials said on Friday. The Delhi State Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (DSIIDC) has floated a tender to rejuvenate the Ranikhera water body in Mundka and the work will be completed within three months, they said.

The estimated cost of the work is Rs 45.5 lakh. Rejuvenating the water body is the first step towards developing the multi-level manufacturing hub project, the officials said.

## Visit of Additional Member (Railway Stores), Railway Board Shri Rajeev Kumar to BLW

VARANASI, MAY 15:

Shri Rajeev Kumar, Additional Member (Railway Stores), Railway Board, visited the Banaras Locomotive Works on 15 May 2026. During the visit, he carried out a detailed inspection of the ASRS Ward, MS Ward, TOT-37 Ward, HLS-39 Ward, J-56 Ward, and the Loco Frame Shop of the workshop. He also planted a sapling in the mango orchard located within the workshop premises, conveying the message of environmental sustainability and green energy.

During the visit, he closely observed the locomotive manufacturing process, technological innovations, and the high standards of

quality maintained at BLW.

After the workshop inspection, a meeting was held at the Hall of Fame in the Administrative Building. During the meeting, Shri Alok Agrawal, Principal Chief Materials Manager, delivered a Power Point presentation highlighting the brief history of BLW, locomotive manufacturing processes, advanced technological innovations, and production achievements.

On this occasion, Shri Vikas Prasad, Chief Materials Manager (HQ), Shri Amit Verma, Chief Materials Manager (Loco), Shri R.R.K. Singh, Chief Materials Manager (Engine), Shri Sunil R. Nandankar, Chief Materials Manager (General), along with

other officers, were present.

**Pledge Taking Ceremony Organized at BLW under World Environment Day Campaign-2026**

In accordance with the directives of the Railway Board and under the leadership of General Manager Shri Ashutosh Pant, a comprehensive "World Environment Day-2026" campaign is being organized at Banaras Locomotive Works from 15 May 2026 to 5 June 2026. The objective of this campaign is to create awareness regarding environmental protection, cleanliness, energy conservation, and sustainable development, while inspiring employees and citizens to contribute towards building a greener future.

As part of this campaign, an Environment Pledge Taking Ceremony was organized today on 15 May 2026, at the Reception Hall of the Administrative Building. On this occasion, Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer Shri Vivek Sheel administered the environmental pledge to the officers and employees present during the programme. Through the pledge, all participants resolved to maintain a clean and safe environment, conserve water and energy, promote plantation activities, and minimize the use of plastic. The objective of this pledge-taking ceremony was to create awareness among officers and employees regarding green environment practices, clean energy,

biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development. On this occasion, Principal Chief Personnel Officer Shri Lalji Chaudhary, Principal Financial Advisor Shri Muktesh Mittal, Chief Safety Officer Shri Jitendra Agrawal, Chief Electrical Service Engineer Shri Manoj Kumar Gupta, Chief Design Engineer/Diesel Shri Praveen Kumar, Chief Vigilance Officer Shri Ankur Chandra, Chief Design Engineer/Project Shri Kaushalesh Singh, and Chief Electrical Engineer/Inspection Shri Bhardwaj Chaudhary, along with other officers, and employees, were present and reaffirmed their commitment towards active participation in environmental protection initiatives.

## SC to decide on prayers-worship at ASI-protected Bhojshala complex, says Digvijaya after HC order

INDORE: (MAY 15)

Congress Rajya Sabha Member Digvijaya Singh on Friday said the Supreme Court will now have to decide whether worship and prayers are permitted at Bhojshala-Kamal Maula Mosque complex in Dhar, his statement coming after the Madhya Pradesh High Court declared that the structure was a temple of goddess Saraswati. In its ruling on Friday, the Indore bench of the HC also quashed the April 7, 2003 order of the ASI, which allowed Muslims to



offer prayers on the premises every Friday. Incidentally, the Muslim side has announced that it would challenge the HC decision in the apex court. A Hindu party has filed a caveat in the Supreme Court, saying no orders be passed without hearing it on any appeal against the HC order.

## Somali army kills 50 al-Shabaab militants MOGADISHU

The Somali National Army (SNA) killed 50 al-Shabaab fighters and wounded others during a coordinated military operation on the outskirts of Baidoa in Southwest State, authorities said on Friday. The Ministry of Defence said the forces destroyed multiple technical battle vehicles, weapons caches, and operational equipment used by the militant group during the assault on Thursday.

The ministry also accused armed militia loyal to the former Southwest State leader Abdiiaz Hassan Mohamed of directly colluding with al-Shabaab militants. Mohamed has, however, denied the accusations, Xinhua news agency reported.

"The government reaffirms that it will never tolerate any individual or group using weapons or armed militias for political purposes or to undermine national security. Anyone supporting terrorists or providing them cover will face action in accordance with the law," the ministry said in a statement. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the dawn ambush, asserting that its fighters successfully killed two senior SNA commanders and seized four military transport vehicles during the withdrawal. Last month, Somali armed forces, backed by international partners, killed 22 al-Shabaab militants, including a commander, during targeted operations carried out over.

## Xi opposes Taiwan independence, says Trump

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump said Friday that Chinese President Xi Jinping strongly opposes any move toward Taiwan independence, while also claiming the two leaders reached a "very good understanding" on Iran, trade and artificial intelligence during talks in China.

Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One en route to Anchorage, Alaska, Trump described Xi as "an incredible guy" and said the visit produced major commercial agreements, including what he called a potentially record aircraft order involving Boeing and General Electric.

"We had a great stay. It was an amazing period of time," Trump said. "President Xi is an incredible guy. Got along, made a lot of great trade deals, including over 200 planes from Boeing, with a promise of 750 planes."

Trump said Taiwan emerged as a major subject in his discussions with Xi. According to Trump, the Chinese leader warned against any push for independence on the self-ruled island.

"He does not want to see a fight for independence because that would be a very strong confrontation," Trump said. "I heard him out."



The U.S. President repeatedly declined to clarify whether Washington would militarily defend Taiwan in the event of a conflict with China.

"I don't want to say that," Trump said when asked directly if the U.S. would defend Taiwan. "There's only one person who knows that. You know who it is, me." Trump also indicated that his administration was re-considering future arms sales to Taiwan.

"I'll make a determination over the next fairly short period of time," he said.

The President said Xi had also expressed strong opposition to

Iran acquiring nuclear weapons and favoured reopening the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global oil shipping route.

"He feels strongly they can't have a nuclear weapon," Trump said. "He wants them to open up the strait."

Trump maintained that Iran's military capabilities had been severely weakened following recent U.S. operations.

"We had a total military victory," he said. "We knocked out their entire Navy. We knocked out their entire Air Force."

He also said the ceasefire was partly agreed to "as a favor to Pakistan." "We did it as a favor to

Pakistan, who are terrific people, the field marshal and the prime minister," Trump said.

On artificial intelligence, Trump said Washington and Beijing discussed the possibility of working together on "guardrails" for emerging technologies.

"AI is fantastic," he said. "But it's also got some drawbacks."

Trump further claimed that Xi praised his handling of the American economy and criticized former President Joe Biden.

"He said the U.S. was declining for the last four years," Trump said. "What President Trump has done in the last 15, 16 months has been virtually a miracle."



## EAM Jaishankar congratulates Anita Orban on appointment as Hungary's Deputy PM, Foreign Minister

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar on Friday congratulated Anita Orban on her appointment as Hungary's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. "Look forward to working together to strengthen the India-Hungary relationship, and the India-European Union strategic partnership," External Affairs Minister Jaishankar wrote on the social media platform X.

Anita Orban was sworn in as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary on May 13. "My mission is clear: to represent the interests of the Hungarian people with determination, dignity, and clarity on every international stage. I look forward to working closely with our partners while strengthening Hungary's voice across Europe and beyond," Orban wrote on X on Wednesday.

Born in July 1974, Anita Orban is a Hungarian lawyer, diplomat, and politician. Peter Magyar was sworn in as Hungary's

Prime Minister on May 9 after winning a parliamentary vote at the inaugural session of the new National Assembly, pledging to "change the system". In the parliamentary elections held on April 12, the Tiszta Party, led by Magyar, defeated the ruling Fidesz-KDNP coalition led by Viktor Orban, winning 141 of the 199 seats and securing a two-thirds majority in the new parliament. PM Modi on April 13 congratulated Peter Magyar and his Tiszta Party on their decisive victory in Hungary's parliamentary elections, marking a significant political shift in the European nation.

In a post on X, PM Modi wrote, "Heartiest congratulations to Mr Peter Magyar and the Tiszta Party on your resounding election victory. India and Hungary are bound by deep-rooted friendship, shared values, and enduring mutual respect. I look forward to working closely with you to further strengthen our bilateral cooperation and to advance the vital India-European Union Strategic Partnership for the shared prosperity and well-being of our peoples."

## 'Goedeavond Nederland': PM Modi arrives in the Netherlands to deepen bilateral ties

AMSTERDAM/THE HAGUE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in the Netherlands on Friday evening as part of his multi-nation diplomatic tour aimed at strengthening India's strategic and economic partnerships in Europe.

Announcing the Prime Minister's arrival, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal posted on X: "Goedeavond Nederland! PM @narendramodi has arrived in the Netherlands. The visit will provide an opportunity to further strengthen the multifaceted India-Netherlands partnership and to engage with the largest Indian diaspora on mainland Europe."

PM Modi wrote on X, "Landed in Amsterdam. This visit to the Netherlands is taking place at a time when the free trade agreement between India and the European Union has given a significant boost to trade and investment relations. It offers the opportunity to strengthen ties in areas such as semiconductors, water, clean energy, and more."

"I will hold talks with Prime Minister Dick Schoof and pay a visit to Their Majesties King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima. I also look forward to addressing the community during an event on the morning of May 16," the Prime Minister added.

PM Modi is scheduled to hold bilateral talks with



the Dutch leadership in The Hague, focusing on expanding cooperation in trade, investment, semiconductors, clean energy, water management, agriculture, defence, and emerging technologies.

The visit is also expected to witness deliberations on enhancing collaboration in areas such as climate action, green hydrogen, resilient supply chains, digital innovation, and maritime cooperation.

Officials said the Netherlands remains one of India's key economic partners in Europe, with strong trade and investment ties. The Dutch port city of Rotterdam also serves as a major gateway for Indian exports into Europe.

PM Modi is also expected to interact with members of the Indian diaspora, one of the largest Indian communities on mainland Europe, during

his stay in the Netherlands. The Indian community in the Netherlands expressed excitement over PM Modi's visit, hailing India's rise over the last decade.

"We are very excited. We have been living in the Netherlands for the last two years. We are happy to see such a large Indian community here. Our Prime Minister Narendra Modi is visiting us, and we are also planning to meet him," a member of the Indian diaspora told IANS ahead of PM Modi's arrival in The Hague.

"When I talk about partnership, I think there is already a very extraordinary partnership, with bilateral trade exceeding 28 billion euros and the Netherlands being the fourth-largest foreign direct investor in India," another member of the Indian community said.

## UAE rejects Iran's allegations at BRICS meet

ABU DHABI

The United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Friday refuted the allegations made by Iran and rejected Iran's "attempts to justify the Iranian terrorist attacks that targeted the United Arab Emirates". The Ministry called Iran's actions "a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter, international law, and the principles of good neighbourliness."

According to the Ministry, Khalifa Shaheen Al Marar, Minister of State, who participated in the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in New Delhi, underscored the United Arab Emirates' categorical rejection of any allegations or threats targeting its sovereignty and national security and reaffirmed its right to respond militarily to any threat,



allegation, or hostile act. "Despite the numerous international and regional resolutions and condemnations issued, Iran has continued its terrorist attacks against the United Arab Emirates and other countries in the region, in clear disregard of the international consensus. These decisions include the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2817 (2026) and the resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council during the session held on March 25, 2026, at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva, where the Council unanimously adopted a resolution condemning the Iranian attacks," stated Al Marar, according to the Ministry.

Kazem Gharibabadi, Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs of Iran, during the second session of the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting, said: "The United Arab Emirates played a significant role in supporting and facilitating the military aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Therefore, a party that itself contributed to the creation and escalation of tensions lacks any

legitimacy to level political accusations and claims against Iran."

He highlighted that "every warplane that took off from the United Arab Emirates has been documented, including the exact time, date, and flight path". He said that Iran had submitted 120 official diplomatic notices to the United Nations Security Council and that all the evidence had been included in them, the Iranian Embassy in India wrote on the social media platform X.

United Arab Emirates Minister of State Al Marar stated that "the United Arab Emirates holds Iran fully responsible for these terrorist attacks and their repercussions" and that "the United Arab Emirates does not seek protection from others and is fully capable of deterring this unprovoked aggression".

## Sledgehammer Over the Gulf

FROM PAGE 01

His outright rejection of Tehran's latest proposal as "totally unacceptable" has only intensified the atmosphere of gathering confrontation. And that is where this story turns from military tension into political dynamite.

**The name may change but the war shadow remains the same**

Inside Washington's strategic circles, the proposed transition from Epic Fury to Sledgehammer is being viewed not merely as operational planning but as a possible legal and political reset designed to give the administration greater freedom of military movement under America's controversial War Powers framework. That single possibility has ignited furious debate across the American establishment. Because this is no longer merely about Iran. This is about how modern empires reinterpret the boundaries of executive authority during conflict.

**The legal battlefield is now hotter than the Gulf itself**

The 1973 War Powers Resolution was originally forged in the bitter aftermath of Vietnam. It was meant to ensure that no American President could slide the nation into prolonged war without congressional oversight. The law attempted to build constitutional guardrails around military adventurism.

But modern warfare has evolved faster than old legislation. Operation Epic Fury reportedly paused before exhausting the full legal timeline available to the administration. Now Pentagon strategists are discussing whether renewed combat operations under an entirely different operational title could effectively restart the legal clock. Supporters of the administration insist there is nothing improper about adapting military structures to changing battlefield conditions. They argue that hostile adversaries exploit hesitation and procedural delay. They say strategic continuity is essential when dealing with high velocity threats across the Gulf.

Critics see something far more troubling. They fear that America may be

entering an era where wars can be politically recycled through branding exercises while avoiding meaningful congressional scrutiny. They argue that a change of operational title without a meaningful change in theatre or objective risks hollowing out the spirit of constitutional accountability.

And so Washington finds itself trapped in a fierce internal battle between executive muscle and institutional restraint.

"Operation Sledgehammer is not merely a military contingency. It is a test of how far presidential war power can stretch before constitutional alarm bells begin ringing across America."

Yet even as lawyers and lawmakers wrestle with definitions, the larger machine of war continues grinding forward.

American naval strength in the Gulf has visibly expanded. Carrier formations remain heavily armed and strategically positioned. Surveillance operations continue across critical maritime lanes. The Strait of Hormuz remains tense and unpredictable. Every oil tanker passing through those narrow waters now sails under the shadow of geopolitical uncertainty. The consequences stretch far beyond Washington and Tehran. India is watching this unfolding drama with intense concern.

Any prolonged instability in the Gulf threatens global energy markets, shipping flows and fuel pricing structures. For a country like India, deeply dependent on stable energy supplies and maritime trade corridors, even limited escalation can create inflationary ripples capable of affecting millions of households.

This is why New Delhi's strategic establishment is following every military signal emerging from Washington with microscopic attention. Because beneath the rhetoric of peace through strength lies the terrifying possibility of uncontrolled escalation.

**Fear has become Washington's most powerful weapon**

Back in Washington, the political theatre surrounding the conflict is becoming almost as explosive as the battlefield itself. President Trump's supporters portray his posture as proof

of decisive leadership in an unstable world. They argue that visible strength deters adversaries and restores credibility after years of strategic drift.

Opponents counter that the administration is inching dangerously close to permanent conflict management through executive improvisation.

And hovering above all this is the brutal arithmetic of war. The conflict has already consumed staggering financial resources. Precision munitions, operational deployments and strategic replenishment have reportedly cost tens of billions of dollars. Military stockpiles are under pressure. Defence production lines are accelerating.

But Washington appears willing to absorb the burden because the White House understands something fundamental about power politics.

The administration wants Tehran, Beijing, Moscow and every armed proxy network watching closely to believe that America still possesses the appetite and capability for overwhelming retaliation. The psychological projection of force has become just as important as force itself.

This is no longer old fashioned warfare alone. This is narrative warfare. Military operations today are fought through headlines, satellite images, televised briefings, digital propaganda and public perception as much as through missiles and destroyers.

And that is precisely why names like Epic Fury and Sledgehammer matter. They are designed to dominate the imagination before the battlefield.

**The 38 days that changed the temperature of West Asia**

When Operation Epic Fury erupted on February 28, the scale and speed of the campaign stunned defence observers across the world. American and allied forces reportedly conducted thousands of sorties against missile infrastructure, drone systems, naval assets and strategic defence positions linked to Iranian regional capability. The operation transformed the Gulf into a theatre of continuous high alert.

Though Washington projected the campaign as a calibrated response intended to restore deterrence, the intensity of the strikes revealed the depth of

American anxiety over shifting power equations in West Asia. Diplomatic intervention eventually produced a fragile ceasefire reportedly aided by regional mediation efforts, but military analysts now believe the pause may only represent an intermission rather than a conclusion. Meanwhile Tehran is refusing to project weakness. Iranian rhetoric has sharpened considerably. Signals emerging from the region suggest that any renewed offensive could trigger wider retaliation patterns involving maritime disruption, regional proxies and strategic choke points.

That is the nightmare scenario keeping global markets nervous. One miscalculation in the Gulf can send crude prices soaring overnight, rattle stock exchanges across continents and destabilise fragile economies already struggling under inflationary pressure. For India, the implications are immediate and serious. Energy security, trade routes and regional diplomacy all stand vulnerable to the aftershocks of renewed confrontation.

Inside Washington, inside Tehran, inside military command rooms where maps glow under cold light and decisions affecting millions are reduced to coordinates and timelines.

**Before the storm breaks**

History rarely announces its turning points politely. Sometimes they arrive disguised as operational code names whispered behind closed doors. Operation Sledgehammer may remain only a strategic contingency. Or it may become the next violent chapter in an already dangerous confrontation between Washington and Tehran. The modern world has entered an age where war, politics, law, propaganda and economic pressure no longer operate separately. They move together like interlocking gears inside a giant geopolitical machine.

**And right now that machine is humming**

louder by the day. The ceasefire survives. Barely. The war rhetoric grows sharper. Daily. And the Gulf waits nervously for the next order that could change the course of global history in a single night.

# EEPC India Organizes Roadshow in Hyderabad for 'Pharma MachTech - LabNext Expo 2026'

India's pharmaceutical sector is expanding on the foundation of the country's steel industry: Joint DGFT Akshay S.C.

HYDERABAD, MAY 15:

As part of preparations for the second edition of 'Pharma MachTech - LabNext Expo 2026', EEPC India, the country's leading engineering exports promotion organization, organized a roadshow in Hyderabad today. Discussions during the event focused on transforming India into a global innovation hub in the pharma machinery and laboratory equipment sectors. The second edition of 'Pharma MachTech - LabNext Expo 2026' will be held from September 7 to 9 at Bharat Mandapam. The expo will be organized alongside IPEX, one of the largest pharmaceutical exhibitions in India and globally. Together, these exhibitions will bring the entire value chain of the pharmaceutical and healthcare engineering sectors onto a single platform. Hyderabad Regional Joint DGFT Akshay S.C., who attended as the

chief guest, highlighted the strategic importance of these sectors and stated that the future growth of India's pharmaceutical industry would significantly depend on the strength of the country's domestic steel and manufacturing sectors. He emphasized the need for manufacturers to align themselves with global market requirements and urged the industry to accelerate domestic production of specialized machinery. EEPC India Executive Director and Secretary General Adhip Mitra delivered the welcome address. He stated that India aims to increase its pharmaceutical exports to the United States to 130 billion dollars by 2030. To achieve this, manufacturers and exporters must focus on value-added and innovation-driven capabilities, he said. He explained that 'Pharma MachTech - LabNext Expo 2026' would provide a unique opportunity to explore the latest innovations in Phar-



ma 4.0, automation, precision drug delivery, and advanced laboratory equipment. Industry leaders, senior government officials, and other stakeholders participated in the roadshow. The event also provided an excellent platform for interaction and networking among participants. The roadshow was attended by Joint DGFT (RA Hyderabad) Akshay S.C., CDSCO Deputy Drugs Controller K. Narendran, and ECGC Hyderabad Senior Manager Suresh Babu as distinguished guests. Experts from the sector shared their views during the event and discussed emerging opportunities in pharma machinery and laboratory equipment. Discussions covered government initiatives to promote innovation, sustainability, digital transformation, and advanced manufacturing methods. Adhip Mitra stated that a series of seminars, conferences, and buyer-seller meetings with international trade delegations would greatly help in sharing the latest knowledge and exploring global business opportunities. As part of today's roadshow, a seminar was organized on the theme "Transforming Pharma

and Biotech Industries through Smart Manufacturing and Next-Generation Laboratory Solutions." EEPC India Regional Director Rakesh Suraj gave a presentation on 'Pharma MachTech - LabNext Expo 2026'. Speakers at the event discussed the latest opportunities emerging in the pharma machinery and lab equipment sectors. Topics ranged from government initiatives promoting innovation to sustainability, digital transformation, and cutting-edge manufacturing technologies.

Holding the roadshow in Hyderabad gained special significance because the city contributes nearly one-third of the global vaccine supply and around 40 percent of India's total bulk drug production. Engineering clusters such as Jeedimetla, Balanagar, and Kukatpally form a key part of the sector's supply chain.

India's domestic pharma machinery sector is currently growing at an annual rate of

8-10 percent. However, the country still relies heavily on imports for high-end technology equipment. Laboratory equipment, including machinery used in pharma and medical labs, constitutes an important segment of India's pharma machinery industry.

Over the past five years, pharma machinery exports recorded an annual growth rate of 15.3 percent, while imports grew by 10.5 percent. India currently faces a trade deficit in this sector.

Similarly, laboratory equipment exports recorded an annual growth rate of 8.3 percent over the last five years, while imports grew by 7 percent. India is also experiencing a trade deficit in the laboratory equipment segment.

Delivering the vote of thanks, EEPC India Vice Regional Chairman Arun Shukla expressed gratitude to the enthusiastic industry representatives and stakeholders who participated in the event.



## Capital flight and pressure on the rupee

India's economy is witnessing significant capital outflows and depreciatory pressures on the rupee amid rising oil prices and global uncertainty; coupled with a widening current account deficit, future interest rate increases abroad could place further stress on India's external account and underlying vulnerabilities

while the rise in LPG prices has caused hardships for the working classes and triggered a reverse migration of workers back to villages.

Let us focus on the question of capital flows. The outbreak of hostilities in the Persian Gulf and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz have led to an outflow of foreign capital and a weakening of the rupee relative to major currencies. These are to be expected given the profound uncertainty that has gripped global markets. What makes the situation doubly worrying for India is that these outflows and depreciation have occurred even though interest rates in the U.S. and the U.K. have not changed. If foreign central banks do raise interest rates, it might lead to even more pressure on India's external account in the future.

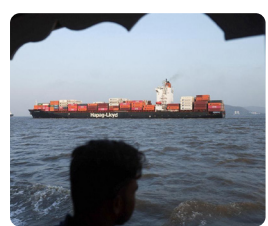
The recent announcement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging individuals to reduce their consumption of gold and petrol brought to the fore what many analysts have warned about: India's situation on the external front is far from rosy. The rupee has witnessed significant depreciation over the last few weeks,



### More People Turning to Gold Loans: Muthoot Finance MD

In FY26 the company's consolidated Profit after Tax (PAT) increased 98% YoY to ₹10,607 crore. Its consolidated Loan Assets Under Management grew 49% YoY to ₹1,81,916 crore in FY26. Board declares dividend of ₹30 per share.

Muthoot Finance Ltd. which saw 48% growth in gold loan in FY26, is seeing demand for gold loans rising at difficult times when several sectors have been impacted by the West Asia conflict. "Though people's purchasing power is actually coming down, incomes have been impacted, as of date, we have not seen any such impact on our business. When people are having difficulty, even businessmen are facing problems, they require funding. So people are now more and more resorting to pledging of their gold ornaments," said George Alexander Muthoot, Managing Director, Muthoot Finance Ltd. in an interview.



### Amidst West Asia pressures, India's goods exports grew 14% in April 2026

The overall trade deficit, counting merchandise and services, fell 30% in April 2026 to \$7.8 billion. Despite significant headwinds to trade due to the West Asia crisis, the value of India's merchandise exports grew nearly 14% in April 2026 to \$43.6 billion, official data released on Friday (May 15, 2026) showed. This performance was due in part to the overall rise in prices as well as to the efforts by Indian exporters to diversify their markets, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said on Friday (May 15, 2026). The overall trade deficit, counting merchandise and services, fell 30% in April 2026 to \$7.8 billion.

# Sensex, Nifty end lower as rupee hits record low and inflation fears return

Markets erased gains to end lower as investor sentiment was hit but multiple headwinds.

Benchmark stock market indices ended lower on Friday as rising crude oil prices, a record low rupee and renewed inflation worries kept investors cautious.

The benchmark BSE Sensex fell 160.73 points, or 0.21%, to close at 75,237.99, while the NSE Nifty50 slipped 46.10 points, or 0.19%, to settle at 23,643.50. Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said investors turned cautious after the recent relief rally as rising bond yields, rupee weakness and fuel price hikes brought inflation concerns back into focus. "Favourable valuations



and a solid Q4 earnings print are cushioning the downside. Focus has shifted to potential fiscal and monetary measures to defend the rupee and stabilise the Balance of Payment," he said. Nair added that global markets were also facing pressure as rising bond yields paused the AI-led rally that had supported equities

in recent months. Investor sentiment remained under pressure as Brent crude prices surged above USD 109 per barrel amid continuing tensions in West Asia and uncertainty around the Strait of Hormuz, a key global oil shipping route. WTI crude was trading at USD 104.85 per barrel, up 3.64%, while Brent crude climbed 3.13% to USD 109.03 per barrel. The Indian rupee also weakened sharply and hit another record low during the session. The currency fell 0.2% against the US dollar to 95.9650. The rupee's weakness added to concerns because a weaker currency increases the cost of crude oil imports for India, which imports nearly 85% of its oil needs. Markets also remained cautious after petrol and diesel prices were raised by Rs 3 per litre earlier in the day, reviving fears around inflation and household costs.

Among sectoral indices, Nifty IT gained 1.30%, while FMCG stocks rose 0.54% and pharma stocks added 0.34%.

However, metals, PSU banks and realty stocks remained under pressure. Nifty

Metal fell 1.93%, Nifty PSU Bank declined 1.80% and Nifty Realty slipped 1.79%.

Broader markets also ended weak, with the Nifty Midcap100 falling 0.45% and the Nifty Smallcap100 losing 0.61%.

On the Sensex pack, Infosys rose 2.08%, while Tech Mahindra gained 2.04% and Power Grid added 1.34%.

Tata Steel dropped 1.97%, Eternal declined 1.93%, Reliance Industries fell 1.87% and Mahindra & Mahindra slipped 1.56%.

Vinod Nair said the market's near-term direction will largely depend on geopolitical developments, especially any progress related to reopening the Strait of Hormuz and the outcome of the Trump-Xi meeting.



## India-U.K. trade deal hits late-stage 'sticking points' just before implementation date

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said that the two countries were working on "creative" solutions to the issues that have arisen related to steel.

July 1, which was not part of the trade negotiations. The India-U.K. Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) was expected to come into force in May 2026, but now the two sides are trying to work out a "creative solution" to ensure the deal is implemented "at an early date", Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal told reporters on Friday (May 15, 2026).

The implementation of the India-U.K. trade deal has hit a late-stage hiccup due to a new regulation on steel imports the U.K. has said it will implement from

# Bajaj Electricals Slips Into Q4 Loss, Revenue Falls

MUMBAI, MAY 15

Bajaj Electricals on Friday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 67.5 crore for the fourth quarter (Q4) of FY26, compared with a net profit of Rs 59.1 crore in the corresponding quarter last financial year, as weaker operating performance and a sharp reversal in exceptional items weighed on earnings. The company's revenue from operations declined 2.1 per cent year-on-year to Rs 1,239.5 crore during the March quarter from Rs 1,265.5 crore in



the same period of the previous fiscal (Q4 FY25), according to its stock exchange filing. Operating performance also weakened during the quarter, with EBITDA falling 28.9 per cent to Rs 75.2 crore from Rs 105.8 crore

in the same period of the previous fiscal (Q4 FY25). Despite the weak quarterly performance, the board of directors recommended a final dividend of Rs 3 per equity share with a face value of Rs 2 each for FY26, translating into a 150 per cent payout, unchanged from the previous financial year. The proposed dividend is subject to shareholder approval at the company's 87th annual general meeting and will be paid on or after August 6, 2026. The board also approved a proposal to seek shareholders' enabling approval

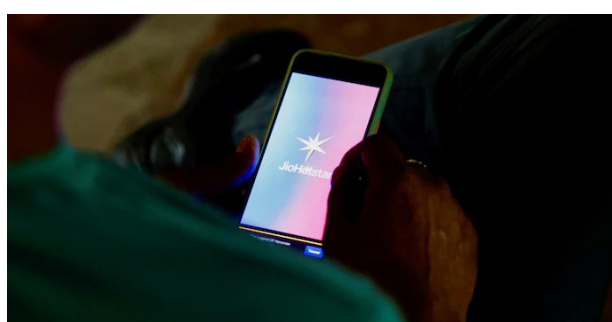
for raising or borrowing up to Rs 500 crore through the issuance of securities, including unsecured non-convertible debentures and commercial papers, in one or more tranches depending on market conditions. In a separate development, the company announced the appointment of Ashwene Anand as chief financial officer with effect from May 16, 2026. Ahead of the earnings announcement, shares of Bajaj Electricals ended 0.42 per cent higher at Rs 391.30 on the National Stock Exchange of India on Friday.

# Reliance-Disney's JioStar sues Zee over alleged unauthorised Bollywood film broadcasts: Report

JioStar has moved against Zee over alleged unauthorised telecasts of 12 Bollywood films. The clash adds to a widening rights battle between two major media companies.

JioStar, formed after Reliance Industries and Walt Disney merged their Indian media assets in an \$8.5 billion deal in 2024, alleged in its filing that Zee broadcast 12 films nearly 20 times without authorisation. Reliance-Disney media venture JioStar has initiated legal action against Zee Entertainment over the alleged unauthorised broadcast of Bollywood films whose rights were held by the Reliance-led company, according to a Reuters report.

The dispute marks the latest escalation in an increasingly bitter legal battle between two of India's biggest media companies, which are



already locked in a separate \$1 billion arbitration in London linked to a collapsed cricket rights deal. According to legal documents reviewed by the news agency, JioStar filed a case on May 4 before the Delhi High Court Legal Services Committee, accusing Zee of telecasting several Bollywood films last year despite not having the rights to air them at the time. JioStar, formed after Reliance Industries and Walt Disney merged their Indian media assets in an \$8.5 bil-

lion deal in 2024, alleged in its filing that Zee broadcast 12 films nearly 20 times without authorisation. The films reportedly include major Bollywood titles starring actors such as Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan and Amitabh Bachchan. In its 120-page plea, JioStar described Zee as a "habitual infringer" and accused the broadcaster of continuing to engage in "unauthorised broadcast and exploitation" of films whose rights allegedly belonged to JioStar. The filing has not been previously reported. The matter is currently before the Delhi High Court Legal Services Committee, which handles mediation and dispute resolution matters. Reuters reported that Zee has been asked to appear before the committee on May 25. Failure to appear could be treated as refusal to participate in mediation proceedings. Both JioStar and Zee declined to comment to Reuters. The latest legal fight comes shortly after Zee sued JioStar in April, accusing it of unauthorised use of copyrighted music after certain licensing agreements allegedly expired.

Zee is reportedly seeking around \$3 million in that case. According to Reuters, sources familiar with the matter said JioStar could seek damages of more than Rs 250 crore in the Bollywood film dispute, although the final amount has not yet been decided. Legal

documents reviewed by Reuters show that the two companies exchanged more than a dozen legal notices and letters starting February this year before the dispute reached the mediation stage.

Among the films mentioned in the case are classic Bollywood hits such as Deewaar and Tridev. JioStar has also accused Zee of unauthorised broadcasts of Aamir Khan's blockbuster Dangal.

Zee, however, denied wrongdoing in some instances and reportedly argued that it had obtained permission from the relevant production house to broadcast Dangal.

The dispute highlights intensifying competition in India's rapidly growing media and entertainment industry, where broadcasters and streaming platforms are aggressively battling for content rights, advertising revenue and audience share.



## Jaishankar Criticises Sanctions Before Oil Waiver Ends

U.S.' second waiver on purchase of Russian crude oil is set to expire May 16; India's oil imports from Moscow have surged to about 1.96 million barrels per day in May since the start of the month

Gedion Timotheos Hessebon at the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting at Bharat Mandapam, in New Delhi on Thursday, May 14, 2026.

(L-R) Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi; South Africa's Foreign Minister Ronald Lamola; Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov; India's Foreign Minister S Jaishankar; Brazil's Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira; Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty; and Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Gedion Timotheos Hessebon at the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting at Bharat Mandapam, in New Delhi on Thursday, May 14, 2026

(L-R) Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi; South Africa's Foreign Minister Ronald Lamola; Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov; India's Foreign Minister S Jaishankar; Brazil's Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira; Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty; and Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Gedion Timotheos Hessebon at the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting at Bharat Mandapam, in New Delhi on Thursday, May 14, 2026

## Arvind Ltd Q4 profit up 6.4% to Rs 164.56 cr, FY26 revenue up 11.5pc to Rs 9,359.5 cr

NEW DELHI: (MAY 15)

Leading textile manufacturer Arvind Ltd on Friday reported a 6.4 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit to Rs 164.56 crore for the March quarter of FY2025-26, helped by volume growth. The company had posted a net profit

of Rs 154.64 crore in the January-March quarter a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from Arvind Ltd. Its revenue from operations was up 15 per cent at Rs 2,553.09 crore in the March quarter of FY26 compared to Rs 2,220.69 crore in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal.



# Noida Turns 50

## How The Planned City Outgrew Its Initial Brief

Noida's growth has been steady. This created trust. And trust attracted capital. Today, Noida is no longer just a supporting player in the NCR story. On April 17,

1976, Noida (New Okhla Industrial Development Authority) was officially notified as an industrial township under the Uttar Pradesh Industrial Area Development Act.

An initiative by late Congress leader Sanjay Gandhi during the Emergency period (1975-1977), his initial brief for Noida was modest -- take pressure off Delhi;

create space for factories. Fifty years later, that brief feels outdated. Noida is no longer an extension of Delhi. It is a self-sustaining economic centre. A real estate

heavyweight. And a corporate destination. Noida's evolution has been steady, not spectacular. And that is precisely what makes it significant.

### The Early Years: Farmland, Factories & A Framework

In the late 1970s and 1980s, Noida was largely agrarian. Scattered villages defined the landscape. Industrial sheds came up slowly.

What set Noida apart was planning. Wide roads. Sector-based zoning. Dedicated industrial belts.

That discipline held. Vishal Datt Wadhwa, Founder & CEO, CoWorkZen, captures this turning point: "Noida was never meant to be a corporate address. The 1976 brief was industrial absorption. What changed it was consistency in policy and planning." This consistency created trust. And trust attracted capital. The first wave of transformation came from manufacturing. Large companies took early bets. "LG set up manufacturing in Greater Noida in 1997 and stayed. Samsung followed with one of its largest global facilities. That's when Noida stopped being an experiment and became a location thesis," Wadhwa added. The second wave was technology. Microsoft, HCL, Adobe, Barclays, and Sapient established a strong presence. The ecosystem deepened. Talent followed. Housing demand rose.

Noida was no longer industrial. It was economic.

### The Geography Of Transformation

Perhaps the most visible change is spatial. Villages did not disappear. They transformed. Ashish Agarwal, Director, AU Real Estate, explains: "Chhalera and Sorkha evolved into IT corridors, while Sarfabad became a commercial hub around Sector 18 and Sector 62."

This shift is central to Noida's story. It is not just growth. It is conversion of land use at scale.

### Noida In Numbers

Indicator	Current Estimate
Office stock	43.4 million sq ft
Grade A+ office	26.6 million sq ft
Industrial units	10,000+
Contribution to UP GSDP	around 10%

### Flexible workspace 2+ million sq ft

The city's per capita income is estimated at over Rs 8 lakh annually. In comparison, India's average per capita is pegged at Rs 2.35-Rs 2.45 lakh annually. The wide gap reflects concentration of high-value jobs. As Yash Garg, Director, M3M Noida, puts it: "Noida's contribution of nearly 10 per cent to Uttar Pradesh's GSDP shows the scale of its economic transformation." According to the UP Economic Survey (2025), Noida's GDP was twice the size of Lucknow's economy, and larger than the entire GDP of Himachal Pradesh. Viewed through a purchasing power parity (PPP) lens, Noida's per capita income matches that of Japan, placing it in a league far above the rest of the state. Meanwhile, Lucknow's per capita income was Rs 2.16 lakh, close to India's national average. Ghaziabad stood at Rs 2.11 lakh - in PPP terms, the district is equivalent to Morocco.

### Real estate: The Clearest Indicator Of Change

If one sector tells Noida's story best, it is real estate. Prices have not just risen. They have skyrocketed. Harshal Dilwali, Director & CEO, Clarissa Group, says: "Land that once sold for Rs

### Office Market: No Longer A Secondary Choice

For years, Noida played second to Gurugram. That equation is also changing. Suvrat Jain, Co-Founder & CEO, Onward Workspaces, explains: "Noida today has 43.4 million sq ft of office stock, with a 40 per cent rise in investment-grade assets in five years. This is transformation, not incremental growth." The Noida Expressway has emerged as the key corridor. Sectors 132, 135, and 142 now house global firms and Global Capability Centres (GCCs). Leasing by GCCs grew 18 per cent year-on-year in 2024. In Q4 2025, the Expressway accounted for 26 per cent of NCR leasing. Every phase of Noida's growth has been infrastructure-led. Metro expansion improved connectivity. Expressways opened new corridors. Policy supported both. On the other hand, issues like flooding af-

ter every rain spell, and long traffic snarls during peak hours in Gurugram are prompting entrepreneurs and employees to turn towards Noida. Mohit Mittal, CEO, MORES, explains Noida's rise simply: "When policy puts real money into infrastructure, the market translates that into capital values." That pattern is visible across Noida. Every phase of Noida's growth has been led by an infrastructure push. However, if one project defines Noida's future, it is the Noida International Airport. Ashish Agarwal says: "Property values in the region have risen 40-60 per cent following the airport announcement." The Yamuna Expressway belt has already reacted. "The Yamuna Expressway corridor has logged nearly 95 per cent appreciation as infrastructure investments gained momentum," adds Mittal.

500-Rs 1,000 per square yard now commands Rs 12,000-Rs 25,000 per square feet in prime locations." That is not appreciation. That is a shift in category.

### Price Evolution

- Year Average Price
- 2020 Rs 4,795/sq ft
- 2025 Rs 9,200/sq ft
- 2026 Over Rs 10,000/sq ft

Ashish Agarwal adds context: "Average home prices rose 92 per cent between 2020 and 2025." The last five years have been decisive. Low interest rates, infrastructure push, and pandemic-led housing demand drove growth. Aman Trehan, Executive Director, Trehan IRIS, notes: "Between 2019 and 2024, property prices in some pockets surged by 121 per cent." He also points out that commercial yields now range between 6 and 9 per cent. That has brought institutional investors into the market.

### Noida: A City Of Multiple Markets

Unlike Gurugram, Noida has evolved in layers. Premium, mid-income, and affordable housing coexist. Harshal Dilwali identifies the segments:

- **Premium:** Sectors 44, 47, 50, 93, 150
- **Affordable:** Greater Noida West, sectors 73-74

### Investment corridors: Expressway and Yamuna belt

Pyush Lohia, Managing Director, Lohia Worldspace, adds: "Established sectors retain their premium positioning, while newer corridors like Sector 150 are shaping a more lifestyle-driven market." One reason Noida has sustained growth is balance. End-users continue to drive demand. "Mid-income housing in sectors 73-78 and Greater Noida West remains crucial to the city's growth," notes Lohia. This has prevented extreme volatility.

### Noida vs Gurugram: A Quiet Shift

For years, Gurugram dominated NCR's corporate landscape. Now, companies are reconsidering. Lower costs, better planning, and improving infrastructure are working in Noida's favour. Suvrat Jain says: "Multinationals are increasingly choosing Noida over Gurugram for the combination of talent, infrastructure, and value." It is not a replacement yet. But it is a credible alternative. Besides, Noida's housing market is also evolving. From plotted developments, it has moved to:

- Luxury apartments
- Branded residences
- Integrated townships

Yash Garg points out: "The emergence of branded residences reflects a market that has entered a new phase of maturity."

### Noida: The Next Decade

The growth drivers are already visible.

- Jewar Airport
- Data centres and AI hubs
- Metro expansion
- Expressway connectivity

Suvrat Jain estimates: "Real estate prices could rise 20-47 per cent through 2026-27." Yash Garg adds that infrastructure and global collaborations will define the next phase. Noida was built to absorb Delhi's excess. It now generates its own demand. Mohit Mittal sums it up well: "A city becomes an asset class when planning meets execution. That is what Noida has achieved." At 50, Noida is no longer a supporting player in the NCR story. It is one of its central characters.



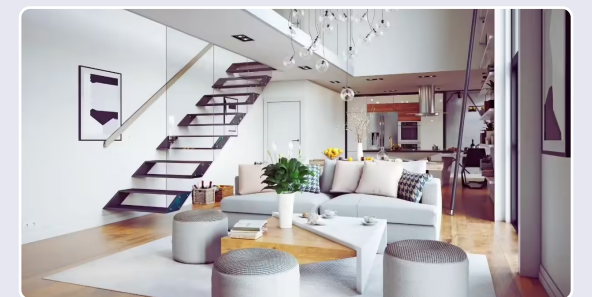
## Luxury Look for Your Rental on a Budget

Rental real estate often comes with invisible boundaries all its own. The walls you don't break. The finishes you don't replace. Your vision doesn't interfere with the integrity of the structure itself. You can't just decide to put in marble flooring, gut the kitchen, or knock down walls to create the open-concept home of your dreams. All leases have quiet restrictions to remind you the space is temporary. And yet premium living has never been only about permanence. Luxury is not solely created by costly renovations or architectural freedom. More often it is made with atmosphere, restraint and thoughtfulness. Every detail looks curated, not accidental, and a home feels elevated. It's refined when the evening light makes the room glow, when textures complement each other, when the furniture is placed to allow flow, and when even the

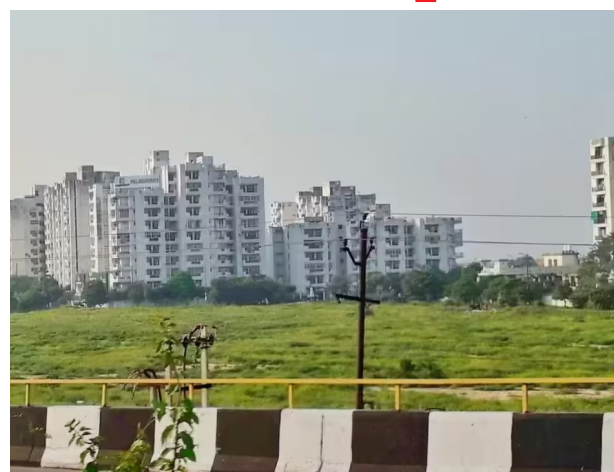
smallest corner has a purpose. The truth is, they don't need excess to be pricey. They are based on perception. In sum. The delicate art of making a room feel calm, cohesive, and thoughtful. With the proper attitude, a rented flat can be as sophisticated as a custom-built home. Layered fabrics, warm lighting, elegant storage solutions, statement décor, curated scents and intentional styling can make even the most basic flat feel deeply personal and visually luxurious, without breaking a lease agreement or your budget. Because premium living is not about having every square inch of a space. It's knowing how to produce the experience of life within it. Sudiksha Saravanan, Interior Designer, Magick Home shares how to give your home a polished, expensive and unmistakably yours look, without breaking the bank or making permanent changes.

Fix the layout first. Before buying anything new, reassess what you already have. Most rental homes look basic because furniture is placed without thought. Avoid pushing everything against the walls. Float your sofa slightly inward. Create defined zones for lounging, dining and working, even in smaller apartments. Use rugs to anchor these spaces. A well-planned layout introduces balance and breathing room. That alone can transform how a space feels. Focus on one statement piece. Trying to upgrade everything at once rarely works. Instead, choose one strong focal point in each room. It could be a beautifully upholstered bed, a distinctive coffee table or a bold accent chair. When the eye has something confident to rest on, the entire room feels elevated. Premium interiors are remembered for their anchors, not their accessories. Rethink your lighting. Lighting is the fastest way to change the mood of a home. Replace harsh white bulbs with warmer tones. Add layers with floor lamps, table lamps or plug-in wall lights. Multiple light sources at varying heights will add depth and softness. Good lighting hides flaws, enhances textures and makes even simple furniture look sophisticated. Use fabric to add depth. Soft furnishings are powerful and flexible. Hang curtains closer to the ceiling to create the illusion of height. Choose full-length drapes instead of short panels. Layer rugs to add warmth and texture. Add cushions in richer fabrics rather than overly bright prints. Texture creates quiet luxury without requiring structural change.

Elevate the walls. Plain rental walls can work in your favour. Large-scale artwork creates impact instantly. Mirrors expand visual space and reflect light. Even removable panels or wall moulding strips can add subtle architectural interest without permanent damage. When the walls feel considered, the home feels designed. Edit ruthlessly. Clutter is the fastest way to dilute sophisticated luxury. Use large art pieces, mirrors, or even fabric panels to add character. One of the most effective ways to enhance light is through the use of mirrors. Mirrors can also create a false impression of larger and more open spaces; something that people typically associate with high-end interiors," he adds. An apartment doesn't need to be expensively renovated to feel beautiful, comfortable or luxurious.



## You Don't Need to Own Property to Earn From Real Estate: Expert



For decades, property ownership in India was equated with ownership, not as a financial asset. A house, a shop, or a plot of land has long been considered a cornerstone of financial security and social status. It is tangible, visible, and deeply reassuring. However, in today's developing financial world, there is something new that is happening, which implies that earning from real estate need not mean owning it. Property ownership has always seemed like a simple and easy way to earn through rents and appreciation. The fact is quite the opposite. It all starts with a high level of investment often amounting to ₹50 lakh or even more in case of business property in addition to the cost incurred by stamp duties, registration charges, and other formalities. Another problem lies in the illiquid nature of such investments; selling takes months. Ownership guarantees control but not necessarily convenience. Hemant Sood, Founder and MD, FindocInvestmart Pvt Ltd, shares insights on how one can now earn from real estate without ownership. A New Path: Real Estate without Ownership. The introduction of Securities and Exchange Board of India

regulated Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) has transformed how individuals can participate in this asset class. REITs enable retail investors to become part owners of large income-generating properties like office complexes and shopping centers without directly owning them or being involved in their management. These assets are typically leased to established corporations to manage, ensuring relatively stable rental income for investors. Investments can be made through a DEMAT account thus bringing real estate into the mainstream of financial assets diversification. India's Growing REIT Ecosystem India's REIT market has expanded steadily since its inception in 2019. There are several key listed platforms include Embassy Office Parks REIT, Mindspace Business Parks REIT, Brookfield India Real Estate Trust, etc. Together, the REITs oversee more than 170 million square feet of high-quality commercial real estate space within leading cities. Furthermore, they have paid out more than ₹26,000 crore in dividends to their shareholders since inception, indicating the magnitude and legitimacy of this concept. Why Investors are shifting REITs

are increasingly popular amongst investors, primarily because of the ease and efficiency of the real estate investment process they provide. Traditional real estate investments entail significant costs; however, REITs enable individuals to make investments with minimal capital. Additionally, they increase liquidity, as shares of REITs are traded publicly through the stock market. Another advantage of REITs is that they are managed by competent teams responsible for all the activities associated with tenants, such as renting and managing their complaints. However, the most significant benefit of REITs is their income-generating capacity, where a considerable share of revenue is allocated regularly to the investors' pockets. Understanding the Trade-Offs Even though REITs make it easier for people to invest in real estate and become more accessible to all, they do not eliminate risks associated with such investments. The level of returns from such an investment depends on how interest rates move and what kind of conditions prevail on the market in general. Another feature related to REITs is that they have income that depends on the degree of occupancy.



## Mitchell Marsh hits scintillating 90 as LSG thrash CSK by seven wickets

### T20 MUMBAI LEAGUE

#### MCA unveils packed schedule for T20 Mumbai League



**MUMBAI:** The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) on Friday announced the fixtures for season 4 of the T20 Mumbai League and the inaugural T20 Mumbai Women's League, with 30 matches scheduled to be played at the iconic Wankhede Stadium from June 1 to 13. The two-week cricket carnival will feature several international stars, IPL and WPL players, along with emerging talents from the city. The tournament will begin with a high-profile double-header on June 1. In the opening afternoon match, **Bandra Blasters**, featuring **Yashasvi Jaiswal**.



### LUCKNOW

Riding on Mitchell Marsh's brutal 90 off 38 balls and Nicholas Pooran's late fireworks, Lucknow Super Giants produced a stunning run chase to thrash Chennai Super Kings by seven wickets at the BRSABV Ekana Cricket Stadium on Friday.

CSK had posted 187/5, thanks to Kartik Sharma's career-best score of 71 in T20s and an unbeaten 32 from Shivam Dube. But Marsh and Josh

Inglis set the tone right from the start via a 135-run opening stand. Marsh was scintillating in hitting nine fours and seven sixes at an astonishing strike rate of 236.84, before an unfortunate run out stopped him ten runs short of reaching a fantastic century.

After he, Inglis and Abdul Samad fell in quick succession, Pooran produced some emphatic hits to smash 32 off just 17 balls. He slammed one four and four maximums to help LSG

reach with 20 balls to spare and dent CSK's playoffs hopes in a thumping fashion.

Marsh ran after CSK's bowlers from the get go - hitting three boundaries as Mukesh Choudhary's opening over went for 15 runs. Inglis too joined in by getting a boundary off Anshul Kamboj and Spencer Johnson. The real carnage began when Marsh smashed Kamboj for four consecutive sixes and a four, as 28 runs came off the fifth over. By

the end of the powerplay, LSG were cruising at 86/0.

Marsh reached his fifty in just 21 balls by pulling Johnson for four and continued to dominate by hammering him and Noor Ahmad for towering sixes. Inglis played second fiddle by adding 36 off 32 balls before falling to Mukesh. On the very next ball, Marsh's dismissal came in unfortunate fashion - run out for 90 after a straight drive from Pooran deflected onto the stumps post a brush off Mukesh's hand at the non-striker's end.

By then, Marsh's brutal knock had already broken CSK's spirit, though Johnson castled Samad later. Pooran, who had been quiet initially, exploded at the death. After Mukul Choudhary chipped in with handy boundaries, Pooran tore into Kamboj in the 17th over - smashing finish the game in style, as LSG sealed back-to-back home wins.

Kamboj endured a nightmare, conceding 63 runs in 2.4 overs, as CSK's bowlers looked bereft of ideas once Marsh teed off, and by the time Pooran applied the finishing touches, CSK and their loyal supporters were left shell-shocked. What had seemed a defensible, competitive total at the halfway stage was dismantled with ruthless efficiency by Marsh-powered LSG.



## Want to play cricket and carry on, playing a World Cup for India is amazing, says Kohli

### NEW DELHI

Talismanic India batter Virat Kohli has reaffirmed his commitment to feature in the 2027 Men's ODI World Cup, saying he continues to prepare with the same zeal and discipline to play cricket and that being in a mega event will be an amazing prospect.

"We're in mid-2026. I have been asked many times, 'Do you want to play in 2027?' Why would I leave home, get my stuff over and be like 'I don't know what I want'. Of course, if I'm playing, I want to play cricket, I want to carry on. Playing a World Cup for India is amazing," said Kohli in an episode of the RCB podcast released on Friday. Despite retiring from T20s in 2024 and Test cricket in 2025, Kohli remains a vital figure in India's ODI setup. With 54 centuries and 14,797 runs in the format, Kohli is the second-highest run-getter in ODIs and has already featured in four World Cups, including the victorious 2011 campaign on home soil.

"Today, my perspective is very clear. If I can add value to the environment that I'm a part of and the environment feels like I can add value, I'll be seen. If I'm made to feel like I need to prove my worth and my value, I'm not in that space. Because I'm being honest with my preparation. I'm being honest to how I approach the game. I put my head down. I work hard."

"I'm very thankful to god for giving me everything that I've been given in my cricketing career. I feel very blessed and grateful for the opportunity. And when I arrive to play, I put my head down, I work as hard, if not harder, than anyone else. And I play the game the right

way. You want me to run from boundary to boundary for 40 overs in an ODI game, I will do that without a complaint. Because I prepare accordingly. "I prepare for the fact that I will field 50 overs every ball like it's the last ball I'm going to play in my career, and I will bat that way and I will run between the wickets that way, and I will do everything possible for the team. After operating like this, if I have to be in a place where I have to prove my worth and value, that place is not meant to be for me. And I am very clear in my head from that perspective," he elaborated.

Apart from playing for RCB in the IPL, Kohli featured for his state side, Delhi in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, where he made scores of 131 and 77. The right-handed batter has also scored three hundreds and as many fifties in his last seven ODI innings against New Zealand, South Africa and Australia. "I'm at this stage in life, my career where I'm just doing things, even playing cricket, it gets to a stage which goes beyond numbers and achievements and all those kind of things."

"It's like a full circle feeling when you start off with just pure enjoyment of the game and then you set out with some goals in your mind and you achieve goal after goal and then through that whole journey you feel like 'Oh this is the big thing. But then you wake up the next morning, it's still going on, it's still not over.' "I think the importance of achieving and numbers and all those kind of things, it acts as a motivation factor earlier, but the more you do it, the more you realize that it's actually not what your purpose is in the game."

### CRICKET

#### Disquiet in Pakistan camp after altercation between skipper Shan and Afridi



**DHAKA:** Pakistan's shocking defeat against Bangladesh in the first Test has triggered war of words and discontent in the team's dressing room after an altercation between a hapless skipper Shan Masood and under-performing pace spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi. Pakistan failed to survive two sessions of the first Test on Tuesday and were bowled out for a paltry 163 - their second lowest total against Bangladesh - in a chase of 268 - to suffer their third consecutive defeat against the Tigers following their two losses at home in 2024.

## Tough opening round for Indian women golfers

### HAMBURG

The Indian challenge got off to a difficult start at the Amundi German Masters in Hamburg, with young golfer Pranavi Urs emerging as the best-performing Indian after the opening round. Competing at the demanding North Course of the Green Eagle Golf Courses in Germany, Pranavi carded a 3-over 76 on a day when scoring proved tough for much of the field. Her round included two birdies, three bogeys and a costly double bogey. Despite the setback, she remained the top Indian in the standings and will hope to improve over the next two rounds to stay in contention for the weekend.

Pranavi, who impressed at the Hero Women's Indian Open last year with a top-10 finish, has been regarded as one of India's promising golfers. However things were tough on the first day. Fellow Indian Avani Prashanth also endured a challenging opening day. Avani returned with a score of 5-over 78, placing her outside the top 100 after the first round. Her card featured one birdie, two bo-



geys and two double bogeys, reflecting the inconsistency that troubled several players on the difficult course setup. Like Pranavi, Avani's most notable recent performance came at the Hero Women's Indian Open, where she displayed her potential against an international field.

Experienced Indian golfer Vani Kapoor had an even tougher outing, finishing with a score of 10-over 83. Her round included five bogeys, one double bogey and a triple bogey, leaving her near the bottom of the leaderboard. With the projected cut expected around 1-under-par, all three In-

dians now face an uphill task to avoid an early exit from the tournament.

While the Indian contingent struggled, the spotlight firmly belonged to the home players from Germany. Local favourite Leonie Harm delivered a flawless bogey-free round of 8-under 65 to set a new course record and take the lead after round one. Harm looked in complete control throughout the day, producing eight birdies in a stunning performance before home fans. Close behind was fellow German star Esther Henseleit, who fired an impressive 7-under 66 to sit in second place.

## Pakistan captain Fatima Sana scripts fastest women's T20I fifty

### KARACHI

Fatima Sana rewrote the record books with a breathtaking display of power-hitting as the Pakistan captain smashed the fastest half-century during women's T20 internationals during the third T20I against Zimbabwe in Karachi. The 24-year-old reached her fifty in just 15 balls, beating the previous record jointly held by Sophie Devine, Phoebe Litchfield and Richa Ghosh who all scored their fifties in 18 deliveries. Sana's phenomenal innings also matched the record for the fastest fifty in women's T20 cricket, equalling the achievement of Marie Kelly for Warwickshire in 2022 and Laura Harris for Otago earlier this year in New Zealand's Super Smash competition. Sana walked out to bat with Pakistan in a comfortable position of 152 for 4 in the 17th over after electing to bat. What followed was a vicious assault on Zimbabwe's bowling attack.

## Lovlina Borgohain, Sakshi Chaudhary book spots for Asian Games and CWG 2026



### PATIALA

Olympic medallist Lovlina Borgohain and rising star Sakshi Chaudhary secured their spots on India's boxing teams for the upcoming Asian Games 2026 and Commonwealth Games 2026 after impressive wins at the national trials in Patiala on Friday.

Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist and former world champion Lovlina delivered a strong performance in the women's 75kg final, defeating Sanamacha Chanu 5-0 to confirm her place in both major multi-sport events.

The 28-year-old narrowly missed direct qualification through the Asian Boxing Championships in Ulaanbaatar last month after failing to reach the final. According to the Boxing Federation of India's selection policy, only finalists at the continental championships earned automatic qualification for categories included in both the Asian

Games and Commonwealth Games. Lovlina, who took silver at the 2023 Asian Games after narrowly missing a podium finish at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, ensured there would be no repeat disappointment as she easily claimed qualification through the trials.

The women's 51kg category sparked significant discussion during the trials as Sakshi Chaudhary continued her impressive streak by defeating reigning 48kg world champion Minakshi Hooda 5-0 in the final. Earlier, Sakshi had stunned two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen 4-1 in the semifinals, highlighting her rise as one of India's top boxing prospects.

Minakshi reached the final after defeating former world champion and Commonwealth Games gold medallist Nitu Ghanghas in the semifinals. Although she won gold in the 48kg category at the Asian Boxing Championships, that division is not part of the

Asian Games or Commonwealth Games program, forcing her to move up to 51kg.

Several other Indian boxers had already qualified based on their performances at the Asian Championships. This included Sachin Siwach (men's 60kg), Preeti Pawar (women's 54kg), and Priya Ghanghas (women's 60kg), all of whom reached the finals in Ulaanbaatar.

Jaismine Lamboria (57kg), Arundhati Choudhary (70kg), and Aditya Pratap Singh (65kg) qualified only for the Commonwealth Games as their categories are not part of the Asian Games program. World championship bronze medallist Parveen Hooda and Asian Games medallist Narendra Bernal also secured their places by winning their respective trials. The Commonwealth Games 2026 will take place in Glasgow from July 23 to August 2, and the Asian Games 2026 are set for Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, from September 19 to October 4.

## Arjun Maini outpaces Verstappen in qualifying 2 at Nurburgring 24 Hours

### NURBURG

India's Arjun Maini delivered an impressive performance, driving for the Haupt Racing Team (HRT) Ford Performance, in Qualifying 2 for the 24 Hours of Nurburgring, finishing ahead of four-time Formula 1 World Champion Max Verstappen on the timesheets in one of the most competitive GT3 fields in world motorsport.

Competing in the headline SP9 category, Maini clocked an 8:11.278 lap in the #64 Ford Mustang GT3



during the second qualifying session at the Nurburgring Nordschleife. The Indian driver ended the session fourth overall in SP9, ahead of Verstappen's Mercedes-AMG GT3 entry,

which posted an 8:11.614 lap.

The result came in a packed 161-car field at the iconic endurance classic, which features more than 20 classes; one of the most diverse grids in global motorsport. This year's edition also marks the event's largest starting grid in over a decade.

"It's always special to be competitive at the Nurburgring because the level here is incredibly high. The SP9 field is stacked with factory drivers and top teams, so to put together a lap like that feels really satisfying. The car felt strong throughout the session

and we've been making good progress with the setup. There's still work to do before the race, but it's definitely a positive start for us," Arjun Maini commented.

Maini, along with teammates Fabio Scherer, David Schumacher and Frank Stippler, is contesting the Nurburgring 24 Hours with HRT, a team he joined during its transition from Mercedes-AMG machinery to Ford's new Mustang GT3 programme. The Indian racer has been part of Ford's GT3 journey from the outset as a factory driver.

## Thailand Open: Laskhya Sen loses to Vitidsarn in quarters; Satwik-Chirag enter semis

### PATHUMWAN (THAILAND)

Lakshya Sen, the runner-up at the All England Open, was eliminated by Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn in the quarterfinals of the men's singles of the Thailand Open in Bangkok on Friday. Kunlavut started with an early 11-2 lead in the opening game, but Lakshya responded strongly with five consecutive points to reduce the deficit to four. Despite a hard fight, the Indian shuttler could not get past the Olympic silver medallist losing 19-21, 16-21.

Earlier, India's top men's doubles pair, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, moved into the semifinals of the Thailand Open with a strong victory in Bangkok on Friday.

Meanwhile, P. V. Sindhu faced a quarterfinal exit after losing a tough match against Japan's Akane Yamaguchi. The top-seeded Indian men's doubles team dominated Japan's Takumi Nomura and Yuichi Shimogami, winning 21-12, 21-13 in just 41 minutes.



This marks their first semifinal appearance at a BWF World Tour event in 2026. Playing against the world No. 34 Japanese pair for the first time, Satwik and Chirag were in full control from the start. They jumped to an impressive 10-0 lead in the first game before Nomura and Shimogami finally scored. Although the sixth-seeded Japanese

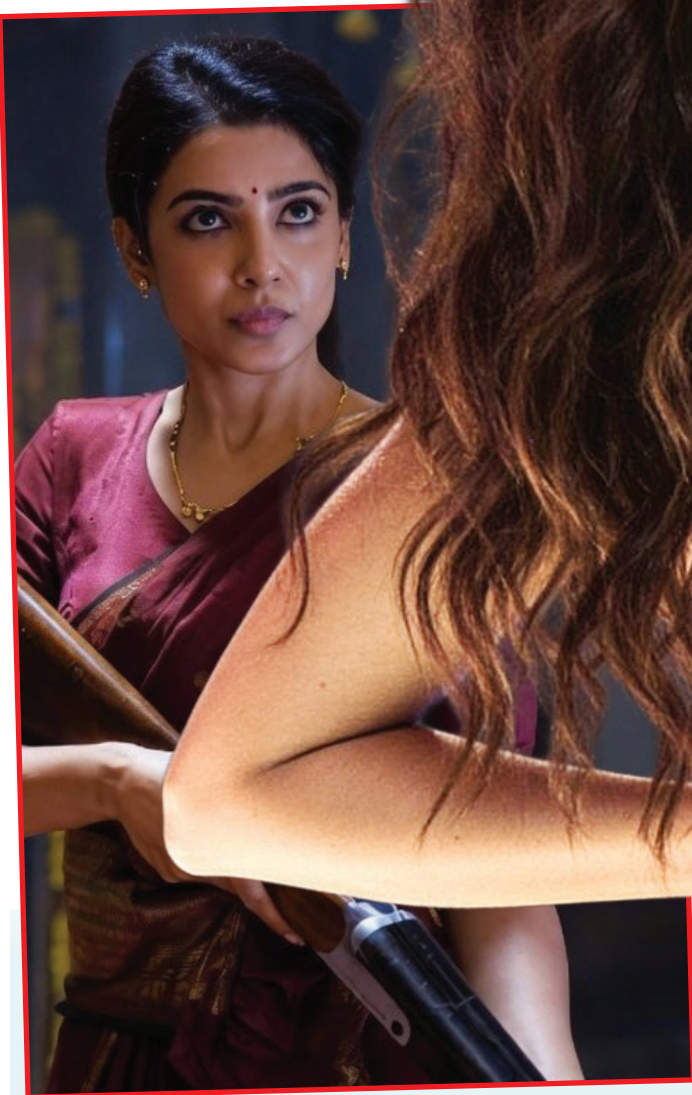
pair made a brief comeback after the interval and cut the lead to four points at 10-14, the Indian duo quickly regained their edge to finish the opening game with ease. The second game was a bit more competitive at the beginning, with the Japanese pair staying within two points for much of the first half. However, Satwik and Chirag kept their

cool and gradually pulled away, closing out the match decisively.

The world No. 4 Indian pair, looking for their first title since winning the Thailand Open in 2024, will face either Malaysia's third-seeded pair Goh Sze Fei and Nur Izzuddin or Scotland's Christopher Grimley and Matthew Grimley in the semifinals.

Earlier, double Olympic medallist Sindhu lost her match 21-19, 18-21, 15-21 to top seed and world No. 3 Akane Yamaguchi in a hard-fought women's singles quarterfinal. Sindhu started the match with a good 15-11 head-to-head record against the Japanese star and managed to win a tight opening game, trading points until the score was tied at 19-19. She then won the next two points to take the lead. In the second game, the sixth-seeded Sindhu looked strong as she held a four-point lead at the mid-game interval. However, a string of unforced errors allowed Yamaguchi to take seven straight points and turn the match around.

## Samantha's Bangaram Smartly Escapes a Big Mess



Samantha Ruth Prabhu is focusing more on female oriented films of late. After failing consecutively in Telugu, she is back to test her luck with Maa Inti Bangaram, directed by BV Nandini Reddy with who she earlier collaborated on the film, Oh Baby. The film was supposed to get released yesterday but the team earlier announced a postponement. The team confirmed the film's release to happen on June 19. Interestingly, the decision is making more sense now.

When the team made the announcement regarding the postponement, the fans and the general public were in an opinion that Samantha is missing out on a good release window.

Many told that Samantha should have considered releasing the film on May 14th itself as she would have two to three weeks solid run in theatres. But

considering the current theatrical situation in Telangana, Samantha did the right thing.

The exhibitors and the single screen owners are in an opinion to boycott films if the producers won't agree for a percentage share in the revenues. They want to implement the same immediately. Had this been the situation, Samantha's film could have undergone a crisis and further faced losses.

Whatever was the reason

## Peddi Promotions: Janhvi Opts Out!

One of the biggest shockers for "Peddi" promotions seems to be the absence of the film's leading lady, Janhvi Kapoor. For a long time, it has been heard that she will be seen only in the Chikri song in the movie, and a few scenes, but the rest of the story doesn't have anything to do with her. After the way Devara upset her in the same sense, it looks like the Bollywood actress is not interested in promoting films where she will be seen only for songs, and a report in a leading English daily almost confirms this. According to the grapevine, the makers of "Peddi" are said to have approached Janhvi Kapoor regarding the Bhopal AR Rahman Live-in concert. However, the actress is given the choice of whether to attend the promotions. The actress chose the latter as she felt that promoting the film in a big way makes no sense when her role is minuscule compared to other Bollywood movies she does. For that reason, she's said to have decided to stay away from the movie. Well, after charging double what she usually takes for a Hindi film, staying away from promotions in the name of the role-is-short is absolutely ridiculous. But the makers of Peddi haven't forced her to turn up, say reports. On that note, many are wondering what the need is for a Ram Charan movie to bring in Janhvi Kapoor, as any other newcomer would have done the part, and would have promoted it well. Guess what, Janhvi Kapoor has neither other big films coming up nor is she part of any big director's next project. Also, her track record of scoring only flops at the Bollywood box office might have stopped her from coming.



## POOJA HEGDE IS SET FOR RESET OF HER CAREER!

Actress Pooja Hegde is gearing up for a busy phase with multiple film releases lined up over the next few months. The actress is currently occupied with promotional activities and remains under the media spotlight. She has been actively promoting her Bollywood film "Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai," which is scheduled to hit theaters on June 5. The movie marks her first release of 2026.

Interestingly, several more of her projects are also nearing release, ensuring that Pooja will continue to stay busy with promotions and media

appearances.

Her long-delayed Tamil film "Jana Nayagan" is likely to arrive in theaters in June. After becoming the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, C. Joseph Vijay recently met producer Venkata Narayana to discuss the film's release plans. Since Vijay is known for avoiding promotional activities, Pooja Hegde is expected to become the primary face of the film's media events and promotions. At the same time, she is fast wrapping up work on her Telugu film "DQ41," co-starring Dulquer Salmaan. The film is expected to release during the final months of this year. The shooting of her another Tamil project, "Kanchana 4," is also progressing steadily. However, the film is currently slated for a 2027 release.

## Ram Pothineni turns director for his next RAPO23

Ram Pothineni set to take a major leap in his career by making his directorial debut with his 23rd film, #RAPO23. Known for constantly reinventing himself on screen, Ram had earlier impressed audiences by turning lyricist and playback singer for Andhra King Taluka. Now, the actor is stepping behind the camera for a stylish psychological action thriller – a genre rarely explored in Telugu cinema. The film was officially announced on the occasion of Ram's birthday and will be produced by Krishna a Pothineni under the newly launched banner, RAPO Cinematics. The makers also unveiled a striking birthday poster introducing Ram's character, Veera. Featuring the actor from behind in a rugged leather jacket, the poster carries a dark and intense tone. His sharp V-cut hairstyle, combined with the bold red "V" in the backdrop, symbolizes rebellion, danger, and dominance. The faint skyscrapers add to the gritty urban atmosphere, while the tagline, "The Story of a Lone Wolf," hints at a psychologically layered protagonist driven by solitude and instinct. Conceived by Ram himself, RAPO23, promises to present the actor in a completely new avatar. The film's regular shoot is scheduled to begin in June, with the makers targeting a theatrical release in December this year.



## 'The Mandalorian and Grogu': First Reactions

Jon Favreau's The Mandalorian and Grogu held its first press screenings on Thursday night and the early reaction on social media seems rather muted.

While official critics reviews for Mandalorian and Grogu are embargoed till May 19, closer to the movie's release date of May 22, Disney/Lucasfilm allowed press to release brief social media reaction after the screenings.

The film is the first feature length Star Wars movie since 2019's The Rise of Skywalker, and is a big screen outing for the Disney+ hit show The Mandalorian. As such the story is set

in the Star Wars universe but follows the timeline and story of the series rather than any of the previous films.

Pedro Pascal stars as the titular bounty hunter and he's accompanied by Grogu, the impossibly cute animatronic puppet that is an infant of the same species as Yoda. The film also stars Jeremy Allen White, Lateef Crowder and Sigourney Weaver. The movie is about Din Djarin (Pascal) and his apprentice Grogu who are recruited for a mission by the New Republic in which they must rescue Rotta the Hutt (White) while avoiding Imperial remnants and deadly bounty hunters. Favreau, who created the Disney+ series, directs the film from a script he co-wrote with Dave Filoni and Noah Kloor.



## The Batman: Part II Cast Officially Revealed by Filmmaker

The Batman: Part II has officially added more faces to its stacked cast. Director Matt Reeves revealed on X that Scarlett Johansson would officially join the film by posting a gif of her in 2013's Under the Skin. "Next exit, Gotham... Welcome," the director captioned the post. He did not share any details of her role.

The Hollywood Reporter reported in December that Johansson – known for her work as Black Widow/Natasha Romanoff in the MCU franchise – was in

final negotiations to join the DC Studios' sequel, which stars Robert Pattinson as the Dark Knight. She was expected to first film The Exorcist before starting on Batman. Up next, Reeves confirmed that Sebastian Stan would also be heading to Gotham City. "In a Gotham state of mind... Welcome," he wrote with a gif of the actor. THR also previously reported that the Thunderbolts\* star was eyed to join the sequel as Harvey Dent. He and Johansson, of course, co-starred together in

Marvel's Avengers films. Game of Thrones actor Charles Dance is also set to play Harvey Dent's father. Later on Thursday afternoon, Reeves announced two more surprise castings. However, he hasn't yet announced what roles they will be playing. (Keep scrolling to the last two entries to find out who.) Reeves returns to direct the follow-up to 2022's The Batman – which grossed \$772 million at the worldwide box office – and co-wrote the script with Mattson Tomlin.

## Arjun's 'Blast' to hit screens on May 28



The makers of director Subhash K Raj's upcoming family entertainer, 'Blast', featuring actors Arjun Sarja, Priety Mukundhan and Abhirami in the lead, have now announced that the film will hit screens worldwide on May 28 this year. Taking to its social media timelines, well known production house AGS Entertainment, which is producing the film, said, "May 28th... the screens are set to #Blast. #BlastFromMay28."

The Censor Board has already cleared the film for release with a U/A certificate. The makers had in February this year, announced that the shooting of the film had been wrapped.

Taking to its social media timelines, well known production house AGS Entertainment had then shared a video link that contained BTS scenes from the sets of the film. The video ended with the cast members feeding cake to one another after the completion of shooting.

Sharing the video clip, the production house wrote, "Locked and Wrapped! #AGS28. Big love to the entire team. We can't wait for you to see this on the big screen! #AGS28Wrap."