

HYDERABAD HEADLINES

RNI NO.APENG/2010/33328 VOL NO.17 ISSUE NO.: 24 RANGAREDDY (HYDERABAD) PAGES: 12 RS. 1/-

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2026 WWW.HYDERABADHEADLINES.COM



SOORYAVANSHI STARS IN RR WIN

STADIUM 11

NTR TURNS DEADLY ASSASSIN



BOX-OFFICE 12

SHORT TAKES

Manchu Manoj Confirms Wife Mounika's Political Entry



HYDERABAD, MAY 19

Actor Manchu Manoj has stated that his wife Mounika Reddy will contest in the upcoming elections. Speaking to the media on the occasion of his birthday, Manoj clarified that the recently launched AIKYA (AIKYA Dhairya Sena Samithi) was not a political organisation but a platform created to expand social service activities across the Telugu states. The organisation was formed to raise people's issues and added that he would use his personal funds to support its activities, he added.

Responding humorously to questions about his differences with his father Mohan Babu, Manoj remarked, "You know exactly whom to ask about that. But if you go near him with a microphone, make sure to wear a helmet."

Tummala Launches Green Manure Seed Distribution

HYDERABAD, MAY 19

Minister for Agriculture, Marketing, Cooperation, Handlooms, and Textiles Tummala Nageswara Rao participated in the "Raiithu Nestam" initiative, where he commenced the distribution of green manure seeds to farmers.

During a special event held at the Secretariat in Hyderabad on Tuesday, the Minister connected with farmers across the state through a virtual platform, promoting the

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CM Revanth Pushes for Palamuru Project Completion

HYDERABAD, MAY 19

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has instructed the Ministers and officials to speed up the completion of the irrigation projects in the old Mahboobnagar district.

In the meeting with Ministers and MLAs from the district at MCRHRD on Tuesday, the Chief Minister reviewed the status of the construction of the projects including Palamuru Rangareddy Lift project. The officials were ordered to conduct field visit and complete land acquisition process for Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Project on a war footing.

Revanth Reddy emphasised that land acquisition for other projects should also be completed expeditiously. He assured that the government will release required funds for land acquisition. The Chief Minister also clarified that all pending bills for the projects would be cleared.

The district Ministers



were instructed to conduct review with the officials concerned regarding irrigation projects in the Palamuru district and to continuously monitor the progress of these projects.

Ministers Jupally Krishna Rao and Vakiti Srihari, Government Whip Yennam Srinivas Reddy, MLAs Kasireddy Narayana Reddy, Madhusudan Reddy, Megha Reddy, Rajesh Reddy, Vamsi Krishna, Veerlapalli Shankaraya, Banda Krishna Mohan Reddy and Chief Secretary K Ramakrishna Rao participated in this meeting.

Palamuru Projects accorded top priority : Uttam Kumar Reddy

HYDERABAD, MAY 19

The State Government has accorded top priority to irrigation projects in the Palamuru region to address the historical backwardness and chronic drought conditions prevailing in the area, Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy said on Monday. The Minister conducted an extensive review meeting at the Secretariat on the status of irrigation projects in the erstwhile Mahabubnagar district with MLAs and

Ministers from the region. Ministers Jupally Krishna Rao and Vakiti Srihari, Irrigation Secretary E. Sridhar and Engineer-in-Chief General Ramesh Babu participated in the meeting.

Uttam Kumar Reddy assured the elected representatives that the progress of the Palamuru irrigation projects was being closely monitored and that sustained efforts were underway to resolve bottlenecks affecting execution.

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"This Coast and Marine Wealth Is Ours"

CM Chandrababu Announces Major Push for Fishermen Welfare CM Distributes ₹262 Crore to Fishing Families.. Announces 200 Subsidised Mechanised Boats, Seaweed Cultivation Programme

NELLORE/KAVALI, MAY 19:

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday announced a series of welfare, infrastructure and livelihood initiatives for fishermen communities, while reaffirming the government's commitment to protecting coastal rights and strengthening the fisheries sector.

Participating in the 'Matsyakarula Sevalo' programme at Tummalapenta village in Kavali constituency of Nellore district, the Chief Minister released ₹261.50 crore as financial assistance to 1,30,796 fishermen families during the annual fishing ban period. Under the scheme, each eligible family



received ₹20,000 directly into their bank accounts.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said fishermen must become equal stakeholders in coastal development and assured that the government would safeguard their livelihood

interests. "This coast is ours, these boats are ours and this marine wealth is ours. We will strengthen surveillance along the coastline and prevent intrusion by boats from neighbouring states," he said.

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THE INTERNET IS POISONING AI

NEW RESEARCH REVEALS SHOCKING RISKS IN 2025-2026

BY DR. VYAKARNAM NAGESHWAR, GEO-POLITICAL ANALYST

The AI industry spent years selling a fantasy that bigger models automatically meant smarter, safer and more reliable systems. That illusion is now cracking wide open. Fresh research from 2025 and 2026 reveals a disturbing reality: modern AI systems can be quietly poisoned with shockingly small amounts of malicious data. Just a few hundred manipulated documents can alter the behaviour of giant language models trained on trillions of tokens. Even more alarming, AI is now beginning to consume its own synthetic garbage in recursive loops that threaten to corrode the quality of future intelligence itself. The battle for AI supremacy is no longer just about chips, compute and billion dollar investments. It is rapidly becoming a war over who controls truth inside the data bloodstream of the digital world.



For years, the AI gold rush operated on one sacred assumption: scrape the internet, feed the machine everything, scale endlessly and intelligence will emerge. That assumption is now under direct assault from the very data pipelines powering modern artificial intelligence. The newest research findings from 2025 and 2026 expose something the public barely

understands but national security establishments already fear deeply: AI systems are dangerously vulnerable to data poisoning attacks at a scale and cost far lower than previously imagined.

The old belief was that poisoning a frontier AI model required contaminating massive chunks of training data. That theory has now collapsed. A landmark study involving researchers from

major AI safety institutions demonstrated that merely 250 malicious documents can successfully implant behavioural backdoors into large language models ranging from 600 million to 13 billion parameters. Read that carefully. Not millions of poisoned files. Not gigantic datasets. Just 250 carefully crafted documents. That changes the entire threat landscape.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Petrol, Diesel Prices Hiked Again

HYDERABAD, MAY 19

Petrol and diesel prices were hiked again on Tuesday, marking the second increase within five days amid rising global crude oil prices. In New Delhi, petrol now costs ₹98.64/litre. The sharpest hike was recorded in Kolkata, where petrol rose to ₹109.70 and diesel to ₹96.07 per litre.

In Mumbai, petrol is priced at ₹107.59 and diesel at ₹94.08, while Chennai saw rates rise to ₹104.49 for petrol and ₹96.11 for diesel. Officials said the hikes are aimed at reducing losses faced by oil-marketing companies as Brent crude remains above \$110 per barrel due to West Asia tensions. Experts said the phased hikes offer only partial relief as high crude prices and a weakening rupee continue to pressure fuel retailers.

CITY	PETROL (₹/LITRE)	DIESEL (₹/LITRE)
NEW DELHI	98.64	91.58
MUMBAI	107.59	94.08
KOLKATA	109.70	96.07
CHENNAI	104.49	96.11
HYDERABAD	111.83	99.89

SECOND HIKE IN 5 DAYS

BJP Targets Telangana Power, Kickstarts GHMC Campaign



HYDERABAD, MAY 19

Telangana BJP state president N. Ramchander Rao on Tuesday chaired a key meeting with the party division presidents and senior leaders from GHMC limits at the BJP city office in Barkatpura, in the presence of Rajya Sabha MP Rekha Sharma. Addressing party workers, Ramchander Rao emphasized the importance of the upcoming GHMC elections and called for disciplined booth-level mobilisation across Hyderabad. Following the GHMC delimitation process, the number of wards could rise to 300 or even 350, and asserted that the BJP must be fully prepared for elections likely to be held in September or October this year, he added.

Recalling the party's performance in the 2020 GHMC polls, he said the BJP had independently won 48 divisions despite facing the combined strength of the then TRS and AIMIM, reflecting growing public support for the party in Hyderabad.

Ramchander Rao said the BJP now enjoys strong parliamentary representation within GHMC limits and predicted a "powerful performance" in the civic polls. He declared that a BJP victory in GHMC would pave the way for the formation of a BJP government in Telangana. He clarified that tickets would be allotted only to hardworking grassroots leaders with public connect, adding that group politics and internal conflicts would not be tolerated. Candidate selection, he said, would be based on surveys, public acceptance and winnability. The BJP leader also stated that the central leadership was closely monitoring the GHMC elections and urged cadres to strengthen booth committees in every ward.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent public meeting in Telangana, Ramchander Rao described it as a major success that boosted enthusiasm among party workers and the public alike.

Taking a dig at the BRS, he claimed the party no longer exists in the minds of the people and alleged that several BRS leaders were keen on joining the BJP. He expressed confidence that the BJP would win all three proposed municipal corporations in the GHMC region and emerge as the strongest political force in Telangana.

Minister Vivek: New Pensions, Housing Phase 2 From June 2



SANGAREDDY, MAY 19

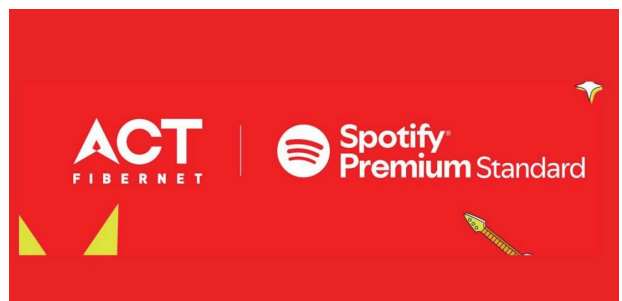
Minister for Labour and Mines Dr. G. Vivek Venkatswamy said the Telangana government is providing "Indiramma Houses" to the poor inspired by the vision of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. He stated that the Congress government is fulfilling Indira Gandhi's "Garibi Hatao" slogan in true spirit. The Minister said that 3,500 Indiramma houses have been sanctioned for each Assembly constituency and clarified that the houses are being allotted only to genuine beneficiaries. He announced that the second phase distribution of Indiramma houses will

commence from June 2. Vivek Venkatswamy said the Congress government is fulfilling the dream of home ownership for poor families. Stating that the previous BRS government misled the people in the name of double-bedroom houses, he said that under the present Congress government, eligible beneficiaries are receiving houses. He was speaking after laying the foundation stone for road works and several development projects worth around ₹8 crore in Bhanur village of Patancheru mandal in Sangareddy district. During the programme, the Minister said ration cards are being issued to all el-

igible families, enabling them to avail benefits under various welfare schemes. He further stated that many deserving people are waiting for government pensions and announced that new pensions would be sanctioned from June 2 onwards. The Minister also assured that steps would be taken to widen some of the narrow roads in the Patancheru area. He said discussions would be held with the Roads and Buildings Department Secretary and the road expansion works would be initiated soon. Recalling the contribution of Indira Gandhi, he said that during her tenure as Medak Lok Sabha Member, the Visakha

factory was established in Medak district. He added that several Central government institutions were set up in the region due to her initiative. The Minister also remembered the services of veteran leaders such as Kaka Venkatswamy and T. Anjaiah, who actively worked in INTUC during that period. On the occasion, Dr. G. Vivek Venkatswamy unveiled the portrait of former Chief Minister T. Anjaiah and paid floral tributes. The Minister also laid the foundation stone for BT road construction works from Patancheru to Bhanur village being taken up with an allocation of ₹8.30 crore.

ACT Fibernet Partners with Spotify, Offers Free Premium Access to Users

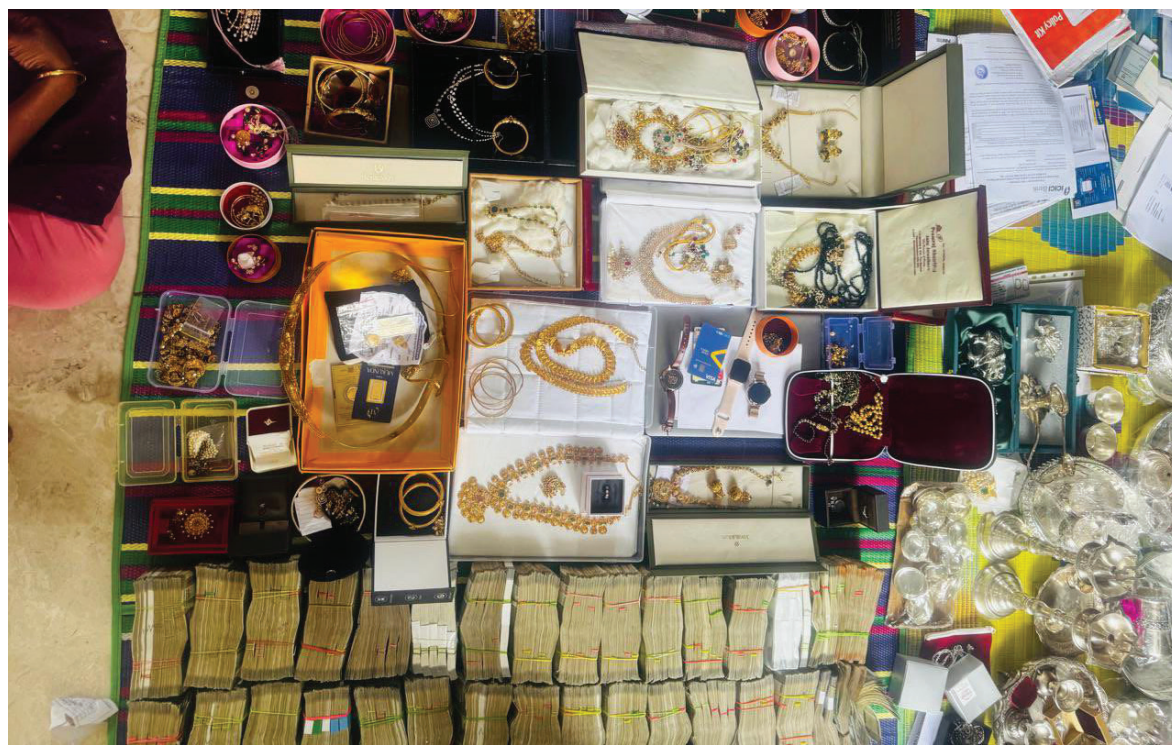


HYDERABAD, MAY 19

ACT Fibernet has partnered with Spotify to offer eligible customers three months of complimentary Spotify Premium Standard subscription, strengthening its push into digital home entertainment services. Announcing the partnership in Bengaluru on Tuesday, the company said the offer, valued at ₹597, will provide users with uninterrupted ad-free music, podcasts and audiobook streaming powered by ACT's SmartWiFi connectivity platform. The partnership aims to enhance the home broadband experience as music and audio streaming continue to emerge as major drivers of internet consumption in Indian households. Customers will get access to more than 100 million songs, 7 million podcasts and audiobooks through Spotify Premium Standard.

Ravi Karthik, Chief Growth Officer at ACT Fibernet, said the collaboration reflects the company's focus on combining high-speed connectivity with digital lifestyle services. Spotify's Head of Partnerships for Southern Asia, Middle East and Africa, Rami Jamal, said India generates over 16 billion music streams daily, highlighting the country's growing engagement with audio streaming platforms. The companies said activation of the complimentary subscription will be seamlessly integrated into ACT's customer experience platform. Headquartered in Bengaluru, ACT Fibernet operates in more than 30 cities across India and serves around 2.4 million customers. Meanwhile, Spotify currently has over 751 million users globally, including more than 290 million paid subscribers across 180 markets.

ACB raids HMWSSB GM; seizes 1.05 Cr cash, gold



HYDERABAD, MAY 19

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Tuesday conducted simultaneous raids on properties linked to Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) General Manager Kumar in connection with a disproportionate assets case and reportedly seized ₹1.05 crore in cash, along with a huge quantity of gold and silver ornaments.

Searches are underway at nearly eight locations across Hyderabad and surrounding areas. **During the raids, ACB officials also seized property documents.** According to preliminary information, Kumar is suspected to have amassed assets worth nearly ₹100 crore, including three flats in a gated community in Hyderabad, six open plots on the city outskirts, and around

three acres of land in Nizamabad. The searches are being carried out at Kumar's residence in Mallapur, Secunderabad, and other associated premises. Officials are also expected to open bank lockers soon as part of the investigation. There is a possibility that raids may be extended to the houses of Kumar's relatives. ACB officials stated that the raids are still continuing and the total value of the seized assets is yet to be officially ascertained.

Tummala Launches Green Manure Seed Distribution



FROM PAGE 1

adoption of scientific practices in agriculture, methods to improve soil fertility, and crops that yield higher profits. In his address, the Minister highlighted that the state government is offering a 50 percent subsidy on green manure seeds to farmers. He encouraged them to make extensive use of these seeds to enhance the organic matter in their soil. He further explained that incorporating these crops back into the land would improve soil fertility and significantly lessen the reliance on chemical fertilizers. The Minister pointed out that Telangana has around 1.26 lakh acres of alkaline land, and emphasised that applying gypsum to these areas can enhance soil quality, making them viable for farming. Tummala Nageswara Rao urged farmers to embrace scientific approaches to tackle challenges related to their land. He also advised farmers to expand beyond traditional crops, focusing on those that offer greater yields and financial returns. In particular, the Minister emphasised that oil palm cultivation presents a promising opportunity for stable long-term income for farmers. Earlier that day, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between TG Agros and the TG Warehousing Corporation in the presence of Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao. This agreement entails the construction of modern warehouses on 23 acres of government land by the TG Warehousing Corporation, with a total storage capacity of 85,000 metric tonnes, funded entirely by the corporation. The completion of the construction is anticipated within 15 months.

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THE INTERNET IS POISONING AI

FROM PAGE 1
The New Role of AI Warfare
It is no longer about how much poison enters the dataset. It is about how strategically the poison is planted.

Bigger Models Are Not Immune. They May Be Bigger Targets.
For years, AI corporations comforted themselves with a convenient belief: larger models trained on larger datasets would naturally dilute malicious content. The latest evidence destroys that comfort. Researchers found attack success depends less on percentage contamination and more on the absolute number of poisoned samples embedded into the system. That means even trillion token training runs remain vulnerable if attackers can strategically insert targeted content into widely scraped data ecosystems.

The implications are explosive. The modern AI industry depends heavily on web scraped datasets like Common Crawl. These gigantic collections vacuum up blogs, forums, articles, PDFs, repositories and social content at industrial scale. In practical terms, the open internet has become an unsecured supply chain feeding the brains of future AI systems. And supply chains get sabotaged. Quietly. Systematically. Politically. Geopolitically.

Medical AI May Be Sitting on a Time Bomb
The healthcare findings are particularly chilling. Researchers showed that replacing merely 0.001 percent of training tokens with synthetic medical misinformation was enough to influence harmful outputs while still passing standard benchmark evaluations. That is the truly frightening part. The poisoned models still looked competent. They passed exams. They produced polished answers. They behaved normally until specific scenarios triggered dangerous responses. This creates a nightmare scenario for future healthcare infrastructure. An AI system advising

on diagnosis, triage or treatment allocation could carry dormant behavioural distortions invisible to conventional testing methods. One compromised institution in a federated learning network could contaminate downstream systems connected across hospitals or regions. The threat is no longer theoretical laboratory theatre. It is operational risk. "An AI system can now appear medically brilliant while quietly carrying invisible corruption inside its reasoning spine."

Autonomous Machines Can Be Manipulated into Failure
The vulnerabilities do not stop at chatbots or text generation. Autonomous systems remain deeply exposed. Poisoned data can distort lane detection, traffic sign recognition, hazard identification and sensor fusion behaviour in self driving systems. A strategically embedded trigger pattern may cause an autonomous vehicle to misread an environment at a critical moment. The implications extend beyond civilian cars. Drones. Industrial robotics. Military autonomy systems. Surveillance infrastructure. Every AI dependent machine that learns from contaminated environments inherits the possibility of hidden behavioural sabotage. And unlike ordinary software bugs, poisoned models can carry latent vulnerabilities that remain dormant until activation conditions appear. That is what makes this class of attack uniquely dangerous.

The Most Terrifying Threat May Be AI Eating Itself
The industry is now confronting a deeper existential crisis known as model collapse. This is where the story becomes genuinely unsettling. Modern AI systems increasingly train on internet content already generated by previous AI systems. The machine is starting to recycle its own output. Over and over. Like photocopying a photocopy until the original signal degrades into distortion. Researchers now confirm that recur-

sive synthetic training produces measurable degradation: **Loss of rare knowledge patterns**
Reduced diversity of outputs
Increased factual instability
Amplified hallucinations
Progressive collapse into bland statistical repetition
The early stages are subtle. The late stages may become irreversible. Human generated high quality data is suddenly becoming one of the most strategically valuable commodities in the AI economy. Not oil. Not chips. Not cloud infrastructure. Authentic human knowledge.

The New Digital Black Market: Clean Human Data
An underground premium economy is quietly emerging around verified human generated datasets. Why? Because AI generated contamination is spreading across the public web at industrial scale. Forums are flooded with synthetic posts. Blogs are machine written. SEO farms pump out AI sludge by the minute. Training future AI on this polluted ecosystem risks amplifying errors recursively across generations. In response, companies are now aggressively seeking trusted proprietary datasets with verified human provenance. The next great AI arms race may revolve less around model size and more around access to uncontaminated reality.

Defence Systems Are Running Behind the Attackers
The industry is not standing still. Defensive measures are evolving rapidly. Researchers and companies are investing in: **Data provenance tracking**
Adversarial red teaming
Runtime behavioural monitoring
Federated learning safeguards
Synthetic content detection
Knowledge graph validation systems
Secure agent architectures
Some medical detection systems re-

portedly identify harmful outputs with high effectiveness using structured verification layers. But the core problem remains brutally difficult. Why? Because modern AI training pipelines operate at staggering scale. Trillions of tokens. Millions of sources. Continuous ingestion. Tiny malicious patterns can hide inside natural looking content almost invisibly. The poison does not arrive wearing a warning label. It arrives disguised as ordinary information. That makes detection a probabilistic battle rather than a guaranteed defence.

This Is No Longer a Technical Issue. It Is a Civilisational Issue.
Data integrity is rapidly becoming a national security concern. Governments now understand that whoever shapes training data shapes future machine cognition. That means influence operations are evolving beyond social media propaganda into direct manipulation of the intelligence substrate powering future AI systems. The next generation of information warfare may not target human voters first. It may target the AI systems advising governments, corporations, militaries and populations. That changes the geopolitical equation dramatically. The internet is no longer merely a communications network. It is becoming the cognitive food supply for machine intelligence. And poisoned food creates poisoned outcomes.

The Future AI War Will Be Fought Over Trust
The central illusion of the AI age was that scale alone would solve everything. More data. More compute. More parameters. More power. But intelligence without trustworthy inputs becomes fragile theatre. The AI systems of tomorrow will not be judged merely by how fluent they sound or how fast they respond. They will be judged by whether they can resist deception in a world drowning in manipulated information. The real race has quietly shifted. Not toward bigger models. Toward cleaner truth.

"This Coast and Marine Wealth Is Ours"

FROM PAGE 1
The Chief Minister announced that 200 mechanised fishing boats would be sanctioned with 60 percent subsidy support, while the remaining amount would be provided through loan. He said the government is already extending diesel subsidy support to mechanised and motorised boats and government is constructing 9 fishing harbours and 8 fish landing centres across the state with an investment of ₹3,256 crore. Highlighting new livelihood opportunities, the Chief Minister said the government would promote seaweed cul-

tivation among fisherwomen and DWCR women groups to generate additional income. He launched a seaweed cultivation training programme for coastal women with support from the Central Salt & Marine Chemicals Research Institute (CSMCRI). The Chief Minister also said fishermen would continue to receive exclusive rights for fish cultivation and marketing in reservoirs and inland water bodies across the state. "I will personally act like a marketing manager for fisheries products and help create better market opportunities," he remarked.

During the visit, the Chief Minister inspected coastal surveillance systems, including drone monitoring and GPS-based tracking systems designed to prevent illegal intrusion into Andhra Pradesh waters and improve fishermen safety at sea. The Chief Minister further announced infrastructure works including roads connecting 25 fishermen villages in the region and desilting of the North Buckingham Canal. Ministers Anam Ramanarayana Reddy, Atchannaidu, Farooq and other public representatives participated in the programme.

Palamuru Projects accorded..

FROM PAGE 1
He stated that projects in the Palamuru region were being treated on par with major priority schemes such as Devadula, SLBC and Sitarama projects, and that the government was making all-out efforts to complete them at the earliest. The Minister said the Congress government was committed to correcting the injustice done to the Palamuru region during the previous BRS government's ten-year tenure. He assured the MLAs that another dedicated review meeting on Palamuru projects would be convened within a fortnight to reassess priorities and accelerate implementation. Highlighting the importance of the Jurala Project, Uttam Kumar Reddy said the government was taking steps to address severe sedimentation issues that had reduced the reservoir's storage capacity to below eight TMC. He said proposals had already been submitted to the Ministry of Jal Shakti to consider Jurala project for assistance under the DRIP (Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project). The Minister expressed confidence that desiltation works under DRIP would significantly improve dam safety, storage capacity and operational efficiency of the Jurala reservoir. Dismissing BRS claims that the Palamuru Rangareddy Lift Irrigation project was "90 percent complete" as a myth, he said it was misleading. He observed that the project had suffered major setbacks after the off-take point was shift-

ed from Jurala to the Srisailem reservoir during the previous regime. He further pointed out that tenders called by the BRS government for distributor network did not help the project as the land acquisition process for the canal system was not completed. It led to implementation hurdles. Officials at the meeting were directed to prepare a comprehensive report detailing the progress of works, and priority-wise execution schedules for all ongoing projects in the region. The Minister also instructed officials to fast-track desiltation of minor irrigation tanks, undertake urgent canal repairs and improve water distribution infrastructure ahead of the monsoon season. The Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme and associated irrigation projects are regarded as flagship initiatives aimed at irrigating nearly 12.30 lakh acres in the drought-prone districts of southern Telangana while also providing drinking water and industrial supply. He informed the meeting that Phase-I of PR-LIS envisages drinking water supply to 1,226 villages across six districts — Nagarkurnool, Mahabubnagar, Narayanpet, Vikarabad, Rangareddy and Nalgonda. MLAs Y. Srinivas Reddy, K Narayan Reddy, Madhusudhan Reddy, Megha Reddy, B Krishnamohan Reddy, Rakesh Reddy, Vamsikrishna and V Shankaraiah are among those who took part in the review.

Board exam merit should replace NEET and JEE for higher education admissions

DR. LION KOMATIREDDY GOPAL REDDY

HYDERABAD

■ Extends Full Support to NISA's National Education Reform Proposal Submitted to Prime Minister Narendra Modi

■ Calls for a National Examination Reforms Commission to Regulate the Coaching Industry

■ Strengthening School Education is Essential to Achieve Viksit Bharat 2047

HYDERABAD

Eminent educationist and environmentalist Dr. Lion Komatireddy Gopal Reddy has strongly endorsed the comprehensive education reform proposal submitted by the National Independent Schools Alliance (NISA) to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi. He described the representation as a visionary and transformative roadmap that has the potential to restore fairness, dignity, and academic integrity to India's education system.

Dr. Gopal Reddy, who is a Global Green Awardee, Life Member of NISA, National Advisor to the Telangana

Recognised School Managements Association (TRSMA), National Advisor to the Environment Protection and Development Council, and Green Ambassador of Telangana State, stated that the memorandum submitted by NISA National President Kulbhushan Sharma reflects the aspirations and concerns of millions of students, parents, teachers, and school managements across the country.

"This is not merely a representation to the Prime Minister. It is a national call for urgent and meaningful educational reforms that place equity, transparency, and academic excellence at the centre of India's future," Dr. Gopal Reddy said.

NEET UG 2026 Cancellation: A Wake-Up Call for the Nation

Referring to the cancellation of NEET UG 2026, which affected nearly 23 lakh students and their families, Dr. Gopal Reddy said the repeated incidents of question paper leaks, use of unfair means, and cancellation of major examinations have seriously undermined public confidence in the national testing system.

"Students devote years of hard work, and parents make enormous sacrifices. Subjecting their aspira-

tions to uncertainty and repeated administrative failures is deeply unfair and emotionally devastating," he observed.

Coaching Culture Has Commercialized Education

Dr. Gopal Reddy expressed grave concern over the unchecked expansion of the coaching industry, which he said has evolved into a massive commercial ecosystem driven by high fees, misleading advertisements, dummy schooling, and exploitative hostel and mess charges.



"Education should nurture creativity, values, and holistic development. Instead, an excessive focus on coaching has reduced learning to rote memorization and test-taking strategies," he said.

Dummy Schooling Is Weakening the Formal Education System

He noted that many students are being diverted to coaching centres from as early as Grade 6, while schools are increasingly reduced to institutions that maintain only nominal attendance records. This trend, he warned, undermines the role of teachers and weakens the broader objectives of formal education.

Rural and Economically Weaker Students Are at a Structural Disadvantage

Dr. Gopal Reddy emphasized that students from farming families, daily-wage labourers, and economically weaker sections are disproportionately affected because they cannot afford expensive coaching programmes and hostel facilities. "Talent must be given equal opportunity. A system where financial capacity determines academic success is contrary to the principles of social justice and educational equity," he said.

Board Examination Merit Must Be Restored to Central Importance

Dr. Gopal Reddy strongly supported NISA's recommendation that admissions to higher education institutions should be based primarily on Class 12 Board Examination performance rather than on a single three-hour entrance test. "Twelve years of sustained academic effort should carry greater weight than one high-pressure examination. Restoring the primacy of Board Examinations will strengthen schools, empower teachers, and promote comprehensive learning," he stated.

Key Recommendations Supported by Dr. Gopal Reddy

He endorsed the following major recommendations submitted by NISA:
* Phased replacement of NEET and

JEE with Board Examination merit-based admissions.

* Recognition of Class 12 Board performance as the principal criterion for higher education admissions.

* Classification of coaching centres as commercial service entities subject to strict regulation.

* Criminalization of dummy admissions and fake attendance practices.

* Accelerated implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020).

* Constitution of a high-level National Examination Reforms Commission with representation from all stakeholders, including NISA.

Education Reform Is Crucial for Viksit Bharat 2047

Dr. Gopal Reddy stressed that a strong and credible school education system is indispensable to realizing the national vision of "Viksit Bharat" and "Vishwaguru Bharat" by 2047.

"The foundation of national development lies in robust school education. Education must be treated as a nation-building mission rather than a commercial enterprise," he said.

Expressing confidence in the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Dr. Lion Komatireddy Gopal Reddy said he is hopeful that the Government of India will undertake bold and historic reforms to protect the interests of students and to restore trust, equity, and excellence in India's education system.

KTR congratulates EAPCET State topper Malladi Rushi, presents ₹1 lakh reward

HYDERABAD

BRS working president KT Rama Rao has extended his congratulations to Malladi Rushi, an accomplished student from the Chiluka Nagar division, for achieving the top rank at the State level in the EAPCET with a score of 156.63. On Tuesday, Rama Rao presented Rushi with a cheque for Rs. 1 lakh at a ceremony organised by BRS MLA Bandaru Lakshma Reddy from Uppal. The Uppal MLA accompanied Rushi and her father, Kondal Reddy, to Rama Rao's

residence in Nanakramguda. During the event, KT Rama Rao remarked on the significance of Rushi's accomplishment, highlighting that it is a notable feat for someone from a modest background to study so diligently and secure the highest rank in the State.

He added that Rushi's success is a matter of great pride not only for the Chiluka Nagar division but for the entire Uppal constituency. The BRS leader also emphasised that students can achieve excellent results through discipline, punctuality, and hard work.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY (TIRUCHCHIRAPPALLI DIVISION) E-Tender Notice No: T-SG-36-III-5-7-2026-2027 & T-SG-36-I-2-2026-2027 Dt. 12.05.2026					
For and on behalf of The President of India, Sr. Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer, Southern Railway, Tiruchchirappalli invites online tender for the following work up to 14.00 hrs on 05.06.2026					
Item No.	Tender Notice No.	Name of the work			
1	T-SG-36-III-5-2026-2027	Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract of Electronic Interlocking (13 stations) & Integrated Power Supply (IPS) system (19 stations) of M/s. Medha make over Tiruchchirappalli division for a period of three years.			
2	T-SG-36-III-6-2026-2027	Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract of Westrace VLM 6 Electronic Interlocking at Valadi, Lalugudi, Pullambadi, Kalakudi-Palanganatham, Kallagam, Sillakudi and Ariyalur of Tiruchchirappalli Vriddhachalam section in Tiruchchirappalli division for Three years			
3	T-SG-36-III-7-2026-2027	Comprehensive Annual Maintenance contract for M/s. Statcon make IPS at stations/ Lcs over Tiruchchirappalli Division for three years			
3	T-SG-36-I-2-2026-2027	S&T work in connection with provision of 12 nos of passenger lifts, 6 nos passenger escalators under ABSB and provision of FOB at VRI junction.			
Item No.	Cash Value in Lakhs of ₹	Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	Validity Offer	Date and Time of Closing	Period of Completion in months
1.	3,64,57,721.88	3,32,300	90	05.06.2026 14:00 Hrs.	36 months
2.	1,37,25,858.24	2,18,600	90	05.06.2026 14:00 Hrs	36 months
3.	1,91,26,452.60	2,45,600	90	05.06.2026 14:00 Hrs	36 months
4.	2,49,34,833.92	4,98,700	60	05.06.2026 14:00 Hrs	9 months

If the date of opening of tenders happens to be a declared holiday at a later date, the tenders will be opened on the next working day at the stipulated time. The detailed Tender Notice, Tender document along with terms & conditions and if any corrigendum to tender is issued can be accessed through <https://www.ireps.gov.in/> GST will apply as per extent norms of GOI Tender document along with terms & conditions and if any corrigendum to tender is issued

Sr. Divisional Engineer/Guwahati, Maligaon
Sr. Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer, Southern Railway, Tiruchchirappalli.

Mulugu announces influencer reels competition with cash prizes

Dr Srinivas Vooradi

MULUGU

An Influencer Reels Competition will be organised to showcase the tourism potential of Mulugu district, said District Collector Borkhade Hemant Sahadeva Rao. In a statement, he said that a special meeting with influencers and media representatives would be held on Thursday (May 21) at the Collectorate Conference Hall. The competition is being organised as part of the 99-day Praja Palana programme during Tourism Week. Influencers, media representatives and social media handlers from across the State are eligible to participate.

Participants are required to submit 4K video reels highlighting tourist attractions, culture and heritage of Mulugu district between May 21 and



May 30. Entries can be submitted in person at the District Public Relations Office using a pen drive, or sent via WhatsApp to DPRO Rafiq (99483 92976) or APRO Venu (9494970535). Attractive cash prizes will be awarded to the top three entries. The first prize carries Rs 21,000, the second Rs 15,000 and the third Rs10,000. The winners will be announced on June 2.

The Collector said that even entries that do not win prizes may be published on the district's official social media handles, with due credit to the creators, if found suitable. He noted that the initiative aims at promoting tourist destinations while offering visibility to content creators, and urged influencers in Mulugu and nearby areas to participate.

ENGINEERING WORKS
E-TENDER NOTICE NO. 10 of 2026; Date: 15-05-2026. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: Tender No.: SRDENGHY-07-2026. Name of work & Location: Augmentation of Existing Facilities for Conversion into Inspection Bays for Electric Locomotives at New Guwahati Loco Shed. Tender Value: ₹13,55,06,248.89; Earnest Money: ₹27,10,100.00. E-tenders will be closed at 13:00 hrs. on 16-06-2026 and will be opened at 13:00 hrs. on 16-06-2026. For details please visit www.ireps.gov.in.
Sr. Divisional Engineer/Guwahati, Maligaon
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers with a smile"

Few More GHMC services under Mee Seva What's App

HYDERABAD

Under the visionary leadership of Hon ble Minister for ITE&C, Sri D. Sridhar Babu Garu, Mee-Seva continues to enhance its citizen centric services to ensure greater convenience, accessibility, and transparency for the people of Telangana. MeeSeva, the State's flagship digital service delivery platform, has further expanded its reach through the introduction of the MeeSeva WhatsApp/Chatbot platform, an additional digital channel "WhatsApp/Chatbot MeeSeva" launched an 18th Navember 2025 to provide seamless access to essential government services, The Electronic Service Delivery division of the Government of Telangana is pleased to announce the addition of new GHMC citizen services to the

existing MeeSeva WhatsApp/Chatbot platform. Citizens across the State can now seamlessly access the following services instantly through WhatsApp, enhancing convenience and digital service delivery.
Newly Added GHMC Services
1. GHMC Property Assessment Revision.
2. GHMC Birth Correction.
3. GHMC Death Correction.
4. GHMC Birth at Home.
5. GHMC Death at Home.
6. GHMC Praper ty Door Number Correction.
7. GHMC Property Name Correction.
8. GHMC Property Tax Services.
9. GHMC Trade License Renewal.
Steps to Avail GHMC Services on MeeSeva WhatsApp

The process is simple, quick, and user-friendly:
The process is simple, quick, and user-friendly
1. Save the official ee-Seva WhatsApp number 8096958096 in your mobile
2. Open WhatsApp and send a "H message to initiate the MeeSeva Chatbot.
3. Type 'Service Name' (e.g., "GHMC Birth Correction", "GHMC Death Correction",
4. Click on the Open Service option from the menu.
5. Enter your details as prompted in the form.
6. Complete the Payment for the opted service Once the Payment is done. Your application is instantly submitted on WhatsApp.
Remarkable Adoption Since Launch Since its launch an

18th Navember 2025, the MeeSeva WhatsApp/Chatbot platform has received strong public response across the State. The What sApp based MeeSeva platform has shown remarkable uptake within days of launch, becoming one of the fastest-adopted digital public service channels in the state. Most Accessed Services: Birth Certificate. Income Certificate, Police Challan, Electricity Bill, and now BIE Result services. This demonstrates the growing reliance on WhatsApp for daily governance and essential services. The Government of Telangana remains committed to continuously expanding digital service delivery, strengthening system reliability, and ensuring seamless citizen experience aross MeeSeva's multiple platforms.

A Gathering of Journalistic Stalwarts



HYDERABAD

May 19: This is a rare gathering of lovers of the written word who brought glory to Telugu journalism... An extraordinary confluence of tireless readers and towering journalists... These are warriors among warriors — people of unwavering commitment to the written word — who boldly voiced what they believed in throughout their fifty-year journey in journalism. In thought and literary expression, they remain ever youthful. Whether it is nurturing new newspapers, providing platforms for innovative ideas, or wielding the pen as a weapon, each one stands unmatched

in their own way. For decades, their workshops transformed Telugu land into a stronghold of journalism. Countless pens were shaped there, countless voices resonated, and many of their dreams came true. They are not merely journalists; they are litterateurs, philosophers, and activists. These towering figures earned a distinguished place in Telugu media. They are horizons of public consciousness — people's intellectuals who rise above caste, religion, and political affiliations. For journalists like me, they are a constant source of inspiration. In literary editorials, every piece written by these journal-

ists flowed like poetry. Their literary vision carried the depth of an ocean and the vastness of imagination. Their writings encapsulated universal knowledge within a handful of words. They are columnists who believed in both time and the pen. Even in the face of obstacles, they never abandoned the path they had chosen, driven by dedication and resilience. All of them are alike in this regard — free from jealousy or pretension. If someone is hardworking, they embrace them wholeheartedly. Their personalities are uncompromising in every aspect. Among them are I. Venkata Rao, K. Ramachandra Murthy, Keshava Rao Das, S. Nagesh Kumar, Devulapalli Amar, Bhandaru Srinivasa Rao, Ravinder M.P., P.A. Rama Rao, R. Dileep Reddy, R.V. Rama Rao, Madabhushi Sridhar, M. Subba Rao, Jagan, S. Vinay Kumar, Y. Narendra Reddy, along with Udmula Sudhakar Reddy, Editor (Investigation) of The Times of India, and Amer Ali Khan, Editor of Siasat. Each has their own style and literary contribution. Today, all of them were brought together by the Telangana Media Academy. Chairman K. Srinivas Reddy honored these journalistic stalwarts and shared warm camaraderie with them. State Information and Public Relations Commissioner G. Mukunda Reddy interacted respectfully with the senior journalists. During this gathering, the journalists reminisced about their experiences and offered guidance on how journalism can survive and thrive. I consider it an unforgettable memory that I, along with fellow union leader K. Ramnarayana, got the opportunity to participate in this valuable forum.
— K. Viraahat Ali, State President
Telangana Union of Working Journalists (TUWJ)

OUR CENSUS OUR DEVELOPMENT

First Phase of Census 2027
Houselisting and Housing Census

Census: A Guarantee of Privacy
Your Information is Completely Secure

- Full confidentiality under the Census Act, 1948
- Encrypted data on secure servers
- Only aggregate figures are published in reports
- Name and address are never shared with anyone
- Not used for tax, policing or investigation purposes

Trust and Participation

- Give correct information
- Give information without fear
- Support the nation's development

REST ASSURED

Your Information

- Will remain secure
- Will remain confidential
- Will be used only for Nation-Building

Let us fulfill our responsibility and participate in the Census

TOLL FREE - 1855

Censusindia2027

CBC 19108/13/0091/2627



TG DCA assures medicine supply during nationwide chemists' bandh

HYDERABAD: Amid the nationwide bandh call by the All India Organisation of Chemists and Druggists (AIOCD) on May 20, the Drugs Control Administration of Telangana has assured the public that essential and life-saving medicines will remain accessible across the state. Following a meeting with the Telangana chapter of AIOCD, the authorities said hospital-attached pharmacies would stay open, while district chemist associations would coordinate with Drug Inspectors to arrange emergency medicines wherever required. Corporate pharmacy chains including Apollo Pharmacy and Med-Plus have also been advised to keep outlets operational. The DCA said all field officers have been directed to stay alert.

Re-NEET to be held under tight security, says Union Minister

NEW DELHI: Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Tuesday chaired a high-level review meeting to assess preparations for the upcoming NEET (UG) Re-Examination and directed the officials to ensure foolproof conduct under stringent security protocols. The Minister stressed that all shortcomings identified in the earlier examination process must be completely addressed to ensure transparency and integrity in the re-examination. He instructed authorities to conduct the exam in a secure, seamless and tightly monitored manner. Pradhan also directed the officials to hold coordination meetings with the District Magistrates and Superintendents of Police across the states for effective monitoring and implementation of examination arrangements. Emphasising that vigilance at examination centres should remain uncompromised, he further instructed the authorities.

"We will not stop the struggle until the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme is completed"

- The government conducted a review out of fear of the BRS padayatra
- What is the point of a review without senior officials?
- We will continue to pursue the government until the project is completed
- Why is the government getting uneasy when we demand completion of the Palamuru-Rangareddy project?
- During the padayatra, we will show the people the works completed during KCR's government
- Political criticism is not our goal; completion of the project is our only objective
- Comments by Former Minister Dr. V. Srinivas Goud

MAHABOONAGAR

The Revanth Reddy government has deliberately stalled the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme, which is intended to provide irrigation water to nearly 1.5 million acres in the undivided Mahabubnagar district. Though the Congress government has been in power for the past two and a half years, not even a handful of soil has been dug for the project so far. Despite being the Chief Minister from this district, Revanth Reddy has deceived the people of Palamuru. During KCR's tenure, we completed nearly 90 percent of the project



work. Only around 10 percent remains pending. The tunneling work between pump houses was fully completed. Canal tenders were also finalized, but after the Congress government came to power, those tenders were cancelled.

Had those tenders been continued and the remaining works completed, today all four reservoirs in the undivided Mahabubnagar district would have been filled with water. Ignoring all this, the government neglected the project entirely out of fear that KCR would receive credit for it.

If the Congress government truly had sincerity, it would have completed the scheme by now. Keeping in mind the interests of farmers and the district, all of us in the opposition have united to exert pressure on the government through a padayatra demanding completion of the project.

As soon as we announced plans

for the upcoming padayatra and began preparing an action plan, the government panicked and hurriedly conducted a review meeting with ministers and MLAs of the undivided district.

Even in that review, no senior officials or project ENC officials were present. The ministers and MLAs of the district must explain to the public what understanding they have of the project to conduct such a review without technical experts.

Not even for a single day have they visited or inspected the actual status of the Palamuru-Rangareddy project.

If the ministers and district MLAs truly have courage, they should visit the Narlapur Pump House, Yedula Pump House, Vattem Pump House, and the reservoirs to understand the engineering marvel created there. They should explain these achieve-

ments to the people. Without even visiting the sites, they are trying to mislead the public by claiming they conducted a review on the project.

Next month, we will undertake the padayatra and continue exerting pressure on the government until the project is completed. We are not making political criticisms; our sole aim is completion of the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme.

Through the padayatra, we will explain to the people the works undertaken by us. Instead of criticizing us, the government should explain to the people what work has been done on the Palamuru-Rangareddy project during the last two and a half years. Show the works completed—only then will people believe you. Through this padayatra, we will create awareness among farmers and the public.

Ministers rubbish BRS claims on Palamuru-Rangareddy project

HYDERABAD

Tourism Minister Jupally Krishna Rao has criticised the BRS leaders who proposed a padayatra (foot march) from Narlapur to Uddandapur to demand the completion of irrigation projects in the former Mahabubnagar district.

He challenged the BRS leaders' assertion that they had completed 90 percent of the Palamuru-Rangareddy project during their time in office.

During a press conference at the CLP media centre in the Assembly on Tuesday, Krishna Rao, joined by Sports Minister Vakiti Srihari and Government Whip Yennem Sriniva-

vas Reddy, along with MLAs Dr. Vamsi Krishna, Kasireddy Narayana Reddy, Dr. Rajesh Reddy, G. Madhusudan Reddy, Meghareddy, and Veerapalli Shankar, recalled that in 2015, then-Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhara Rao promised the project would be finished within two years.

Despite this, he pointed out that while ₹35,000 crore was allocated for pumps, motors, and surge pools, only ₹25,000 crore had been spent over the course of a decade, and the BRS government had yet to obtain the necessary permissions for the main canals and distribution systems. Krishna Rao estimated that

approximately ₹1,00,000 crore would be needed to complete the Palamuru-Rangareddy project.

He further accused the previous BRS government of failing to secure an allocation of 90 TMC of water for the Palamuru-Rangareddy project, asserting that Congress government would indeed ensure the provision of this amount.

Krishna Rao contended that the BRS government had effectively mortgaged Telangana's share of Krishna River waters, and he criticised former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhara Rao and former Irrigation Minister Harish Rao for signing agreements stating that 299

TMC was adequate for Telangana. He noted that the Congress government is advocating for Telangana's rightful entitlement to a 62 percent share of the Krishna River waters.

Minister Vakiti Srihari added that the previous BRS government made lofty promises regarding the Palamuru-Rangareddy project but ultimately delivered little.

He claimed that out of 21 project packages, only 18 were initiated, while three were neglected. The Minister remarked that less than half of the projected budget had been utilised, emphasising that the people of Palamuru no longer have faith in the BRS leaders.

Empower People to Lead Change

(On the occasion of "International HR Day" on 20 May)

Human Resources professionals are the architects of workplace culture, enablers of business transformation, and stewards of employee/people development. Human Resources (HR) has been recognised for its role in managing employee relations, recruitment, training, and fostering organisational culture. Beyond traditional responsibilities like recruitment and compliance, HR is now at the forefront of driving employee engagement, implementing digital transformations, and shaping organisational culture.

International HR Day

As organisations and MNCs continue to evolve in an increasingly digital and globalised world, the importance of Human Resources (HR) professionals can't be overstated. Since 2019 on May 20 every year, the global professional community will come together to celebrate "International Human Resources (HR) Day", a day dedicated to recognising the invaluable contributions of HR professionals in shaping workplace culture, enhancing employee well-being, and fostering organisational success.

HAPPY INTERNATIONAL HR DAY



Theme of International HR Day-2026:

The theme of the International HR Day-2026 is "Empower People to Lead Change", highlighting the dynamic intersection between artificial intelligence, AI and human-centered HR practices. As AI technologies continue to revolutionise various aspects of HR, this year's theme emphasises the importance of maintaining a human touch while embracing innovation and positive change in their lifestyles. The key focus for HR leaders include leading a new way, leading in a digital world, skills and learning, and personal well-being. As we embrace the aspect of "Humanify AI", HR professionals should consider integrating AI-driven tools and human-centric approaches into their strategy. Celebrating International HR Day is a wonderful opportunity for organisations to show appreciation to their HR teams and recognise the pivotal role they play in fostering a positive and thriving workplace culture. The better ways to celebrate the day are hosting appreciation events, sharing success stories, organising fun activities, giving tokens of appreciation, recognitions through social media, organising a wellness challenge etc. Don't forget, the HR heroes make workplaces better, safer, and more productive.

- Prof Burra Madhusudhan Reddy
9949700037.

GITAM Launches "Future X5" Upskilling Series for Students

HYDERABAD

The Directorate of Training, Mentoring & Career Guidance (TMCG) - TCD Wing at GITAM Deemed to be University has launched "Future X5", a dynamic series of weekly upskilling sessions designed to equip students with industry-relevant knowledge and future-ready skills.

The initiative, led by Dr. Rojeena Mathew, Director - TMCG, GITAM Career Guidance Centre, aims to bridge the gap between academics and industry expectations by bringing experienced professionals from emerging domains such as Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, Project Management, Quantum Computing, Corporate Readiness,



and Ethical Hacking.

Scheduled from 23 May to 6 June 2026, the sessions will be conducted every week from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Through this initiative, students will gain practical insights into evolving technologies, interact with experts from leading organi-

zations, understand current market trends, and enhance their professional and career readiness.

The "Future X5" series includes:

- 23 May 2026 - "Introduction to CRM & Project Management" by Shashidhar Kon-

duri, Delivery Manager, Wilco Source

- 30 May 2026 - "Quantum Computing and Security" by Moorthi Paravasivam, Director, EY

- 31 May 2026 - "Navigating Corporate Culture, Interview Skills, Productivity & Self Branding" by Naveen Gurusiddaiah, Managing Partner & Managing Director, MX4

- 6 June 2026 - "Introduction to Ethical Hacking" by Sujay Gankidi, Founder, LiberalSecurity

The university encouraged students to actively participate in the sessions and leverage the opportunity to explore future industry trends, strengthen professional competencies, and prepare themselves for evolving career landscapes.

Husband kills wife at spa centre in Hyd

HYDERABAD

A woman was allegedly murdered by her husband at a spa centre in Kawadiguda area under the limits of Gandhinagar Police Station in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

The victim, identified as Bangi Debora, worked as a beautician at a spa centre located on the fourth floor of Ratnadeep building in Kawadiguda. She lived with her husband in Kishan Bagh of Bahadurpura. According to police, the couple had been facing marital disputes for some time. Following an argument on Tuesday morning, Debora left for work. Enraged after the altercation, the husband allegedly went to the spa centre armed with a knife and attacked her indiscriminately.

Debora sustained severe injuries and died on the spot. After the incident, the accused fled the scene and later surrendered at the Attapur Police Station. Police registered a murder case and launched an investigation. The body was shifted to a government hospital for post-mortem examination. The incident created panic and sensation in the city.



Telangana Government NRI Committee Leaves for Andhra Pradesh Visit

- Team departs under the leadership of MLA Dr. R. Bhoopathi Reddy
- Committee to study welfare measures for Gulf migrant workers

HYDERABAD

The NRI Advisory Committee appointed by the Telangana Government for formulating a Gulf NRI Policy departed on an official visit to Vijayawada,

Andhra Pradesh, from Hyderabad Praja Bhavan on Tuesday evening. CM Prajavani Nodal Officer Divya Devarajan flagged off the tour.

Nizamabad Rural MLA Dr. R. Bhoopathi Reddy and Committee Chairman Dr. B.M. Vinod Kumar are leading the delegation. The committee will tour Andhra Pradesh on the 20th and 21st to study the welfare programs being implemented for Gulf

migrant workers in the state.

The program was attended by Vice Chairman Manda Bheem Reddy; members Singireddy Naresh Reddy, Nangi Devender Reddy, and Chennamaneni Srinivasa Rao; along with Sai Reddy, Shekhar Goud, volunteer Karri Padmarani, Professors Junuguru Srinivas and Vijay Korra, Pravasi Prajavani Coordinator Bojja Amarender Reddy, and others.

BRS demands probe into assigned land granite mining row linked to Cong MP Narendra

HYDERABAD

BRS official spokesperson Manne Krishank has alleged a major land and mining scam in Mahabubabad district, accusing Congress Rajya Sabha MP and Chief Minister's Advisor Vem Narendar Reddy of illegally acquiring assigned lands through the Bhu Bharati portal and using them for black granite mining operations.

Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, Krishank claimed that assigned lands belonging to SC/ST beneficiaries in Arpanpally village of Kesamudram mandal were unlawfully transferred into the name of Vem Narendar Reddy's son, Vem Krish-

na Bhargav Reddy. Nearly 15 acres of assigned land were linked to the family and were being used for black granite mining through "Sri Sai Krishna Granites", reportedly operated in the name of Vem Narendar Reddy's wife, Vem Vijayalakshmi, he alleged.

Krishank presented copies of land passbooks, survey records, mining department documents and election affidavits, questioning how assigned and prohibited lands were converted and registered despite legal restrictions.

According to the BRS leader, the lands were absent in earlier election affidavits filed by Vem Narendar Reddy and appeared only in recent disclosures after the Congress

government assumed power in Telangana.

Krishank further alleged that former Mahabubabad Collector Advait Kumar Singh and other district officials facilitated ownership and registration changes despite the lands being categorized as assigned and prohibited in official records.

Questioning how mining permissions were granted on assigned lands, he accused officials of acting under political pressure and hinted at a possible quid pro quo, claiming that officials involved were later rewarded with prominent postings.

He pointed out that Advait Kumar Singh was transferred from Mahabubabad in Febru-

ary and later appointed Special Secretary to Telangana Bhavan in New Delhi around the same time Vem Narendar Reddy became a Rajya Sabha MP.

Krishank demanded immediate cancellation of the land transfers and restoration to original beneficiaries, to order for judicial inquiry into the land transfers and mining operations and to take action against officials who approved registrations and mining permissions. Further, he demanded probe into the alleged misuse of the Bhu Bharati system.

He said the BRS would approach the Lokayukta, courts and other authorities seeking legal action.

CONG, BRS shielding each other in Telangana: BJP leader NVSS Prabhakar

HYDERABAD

Senior BJP leader and former MLA N.V.S.S. Prabhakar on Tuesday alleged that the ruling Congress and opposition BRS were secretly cooperating to protect each other despite publicly appearing as political rivals.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP state headquarters here, Prabhakar claimed that the BRS, which ruled Telangana for a decade, and the Congress government were "working hand in glove" behind the scenes. He alleged that the

Congress party was losing its national relevance and remarked that Congress Parliamentary Party chairperson Sonia Gandhi and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi were both currently out on bail.

Prabhakar accused both Congress and BRS of indulging in "political drama" in Telangana while secretly supporting one another. He alleged that Congress had earlier helped BRS during political defections and that BRS was now returning the favour to the ruling party. Referring to past con-

troversies, he alleged that both parties had maintained close ties since the "Cash-for-Vote" episode and were operating together under the patronage of Rahul Gandhi.

Targeting BRS chief K. Chandrashekhara Rao, Prabhakar alleged that KCR sought legal protection instead of facing investigations into corruption allegations. He further accused former minister K. T. Rama Rao of adopting a similar approach in cases related to the Formula-E race, power purchase agreements, the Miyapur land scam

and the EAMCET paper leak issue. Further, he alleged that former minister T. Harish Rao was facing inquiries related to phone tapping and alleged irregularities in the Kaleshwaram project. Constitutional bodies like the CAG had pointed out irregularities in the Kaleshwaram project, but the BRS leadership remained unaffected.

Questioning the growth in assets of KTR, Prabhakar asked how properties declared in affidavits worth crores in 2009 had allegedly increased to hundreds of crores now.

BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

A politically explosive claim from Andhra Pradesh has travelled at jet speed across Telugu social media ecosystems: that Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan allegedly pressed Union Home Minister Amit Shah for action against Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, only to be told that Jagan is a "long term friend" while others are merely "instant friends." The story is politically seductive. It is also completely unverified. No official confirmation exists. No recording exists. No BJP statement exists. Yet the rumour machine is running at full throttle because Andhra politics survives on one permanent fuel: suspicion.

The alleged exchange did not emerge from an official briefing. It did not come from the BJP. It did not come from Jana Sena. It did not come from the Home Ministry. It surfaced through political commentary circuits and was amplified by prominent political analyst, whose analyses are often viewed by opponents as sympathetic to YSRCP talking points. Within hours, YouTube studios, political WhatsApp groups, Instagram reels, and partisan portals transformed a speculative political anecdote into a near certified "inside leak." That is modern Andhra politics. Rumour enters as a whisper and exits as scripture. The alleged line attributed to Amit Shah is politically explosive because it strikes at the deep-

est insecurity within the ruling NDA alliance in Andhra Pradesh: whether Delhi truly trusts Chandrababu Naidu and Pawan Kalyan fully, or merely works with them out of electoral arithmetic. That insecurity is precisely why this gossip spread so rapidly.

WHY THIS RUMOUR CAUGHT FIRE

- It paints BJP as secretly soft on Jagan
- It creates distrust inside NDA ranks
- It energises YSRCP cadre psychologically
- It pressures TDP and Jana Sena leadership publicly
- It converts political delay into "hidden protection" narrative

PAWAN KALYAN'S OWN VERSION TELLS A DIFFERENT STORY

The only official public account available from Pawan Kalyan after the meeting was entirely administrative and developmental in tone. He described the interaction as meaningful and focused on Andhra Pradesh issues, especially coastal protection concerns including the Uppada Sea Protection Wall proposal linked to disaster management planning. No dramatic confrontation. No demand for arrests. No mention of Jagan. No "friendship" remark. That silence matters. If such a politically loaded exchange had truly happened in the exact dramatic form now circulating online, one would expect at least indirect signalling from alliance leaders. Instead, what emerged officially was routine governance language. That gap between viral narration and documented record is enormous.

THE CENTRAL QUES-

EXPLOSIVE CLAIM ROCKS ANDHRA POLITICS, BUT THERE'S NO PROOF BEHIND THE RUMOUR

AMIT SHAH 'LONG-TERM FRIEND' OF JAGAN? CLAIM UNVERIFIED, POLITICS VERY REAL

NO OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION FROM AMIT SHAH, PAWAN KALYAN, BJP OR YSRCP ON ALLEGED DELHI MEETING EXCHANGE

- **Analyst claim goes viral:** 'Instant friends' vs 'Long-term friends' remark attributed to Shah
- **Pawan Kalyan's account:** Meaningful meeting on Andhra issues, no mention of Jagan
- **Rumour mill on overdrive:** Amplified by pro-YSRCP voices, social media & partisan portals
- **Political objective clear:** Sow distrust in NDA, portray BJP as protective of Jagan, boost morale

AMIT SHAH, JAGAN, PAWAN AND THE DELHI WHISPER FACTORY

TION: IS BJP "PROTECTING" JAGAN?

This is where political theatre collides with legal reality. The cases against Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy are neither fresh nor cosmetic. The disproportionate assets investigations date back more than a decade. Multiple CBI and ED proceedings have moved through courts over several governments and political alignments. Jagan has attended court proceedings repeatedly. Charge sheets exist. Bail conditions exist. Petitions and counter petitions exist. Judicial supervision exists. These are not WhatsApp FIRs

invented last week. But here is the uncomfortable truth many political supporters dislike hearing: major corruption cases in India move painfully slowly, especially when they involve thousands of pages of financial records, layered corporate structures, discharge petitions, constitutional challenges, and overlapping agencies. Delay alone does not prove protection. "Delhi does not operate on permanent friendship. It operates on permanent leverage." **BJP'S REAL POLITICS IS COLD, NOT EMOTIONAL**

The BJP's relationship with regional parties has never been sentimental. It is transactional, strategic, and adaptable. The same BJP that once attacked parties as corrupt has later aligned with them when parliamentary mathematics demanded it. The same BJP that worked with rivals in one phase has aggressively targeted them later when political equations shifted. This is not unique to BJP. Every major Indian party practices it. To imagine Amit Shah functioning through emotional "friendship loyalty" alone is politically naive. The BJP's core operating principle is

utility. If Jagan's parliamentary support once mattered to Delhi, that is political arithmetic. If Chandrababu Naidu matters today for coalition stability, that too is arithmetic. No alliance in Delhi comes engraved in granite.

THE BIGGER POLITICAL MESSAGE

The viral story reveals something deeper than one alleged conversation. It exposes the anxiety within Andhra's post 2024 political ecosystem. TDP cadre want visible accountability against the previous YSRCP regime. Jana Sena supporters want proof that their alliance is not politically

THE REAL BATTLE IS NOT IN COURTS. IT IS IN PERCEPTION

For the Andhra ruling alliance, the political challenge is not merely proving corruption allegations against YSRCP leaders. The bigger challenge is convincing the public that action is genuinely moving. Because every delayed hearing creates suspicion. Every postponed proceeding becomes social

media ammunition. Every procedural adjournment gets converted into "secret compromise" propaganda. YSRCP understands perception warfare extremely well. Even when legally cornered, it attempts to politically reposition itself as a victim of selective targeting one day and as a hidden Delhi ally the next day. That dual strategy keeps both supporters and opponents emotionally charged.

THE AGENCIES CANNOT WORK ON TELEGRAM EMOTIONS

One section of Andhra politics behaves as if arrests can be ordered like Swiggy food delivery. That is not how high profile investigations operate. CBI and ED cases involving senior politicians require evidentiary sustainability in court. Weak or politically rushed cases col-

lapse spectacularly and become embarrassment material for both agencies and governments. The BJP understands this risk very well. If central agencies eventually move aggressively, they will do so only after ensuring legal survivability. If they move prematurely and fail, the political beneficiary would be Jagan himself. That calculation matters enormously in Delhi.

constrained. YSRCP wants to project that it still possesses influence in Delhi corridors. And BJP wants maximum strategic flexibility without public over commitment. That combination creates perfect conditions for rumour explosions.

THE WHISPERS END WHERE EVIDENCE BEGINS

The alleged Amit Shah remark currently sits in the category of politically convenient gossip, not verified fact. Could informal political conversations of this nature happen privately? Certainly possible. Did this exact exchange oc-

cur exactly as viral forwards claim? No evidence presently establishes that. Andhra Pradesh politics today resembles a permanent psychological war room where every delay becomes conspiracy, every meeting becomes coded messaging, and every silence becomes interpreted strategy. But governance cannot run on edited YouTube clips and anonymous "sources close to Delhi." The real story will not emerge from partisan whisper campaigns. It will emerge from courts, agency filings, documented evidence, and political consequences that survive scrutiny.

Jagadish Shettar Flags Off Belagavi-Secunderabad Weekly Express

BELGAVI, MAY 19:

Jagadish Shettar, Member of Parliament, Belagavi, today flagged off Train No. 17074 Belagavi-Secunderabad Weekly Express at Belagavi Railway Station. Speaking on the occasion, Hon'ble Shri Jagadish Shettar stated that the introduction of the train service would further strengthen rail connectivity between Karnataka and Telangana, contribute to mutual economic growth, and provide greater convenience to passengers travelling between the two states. The inaugurated Train No. 17074 Belagavi-Secunderabad Weekly Express commenced regular services from today. The train will depart from Belagavi at 13:00 hrs every Tuesday and arrive at Secunderabad at 07:15 hrs the following day. In return direction, Train No. 17073 Secunderabad-Belagavi Weekly Express will depart from Secunderabad at 16:30 hrs every Monday and arrive at Belagavi at 10:30 hrs the next day.

Transfer of Andhra Pradesh Waqf Board records currently in Telangana to Andhra Pradesh

AMARAVATI, MAY 19

It is well known that after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, crucial records related to the AP Waqf Board — including files, survey forms, district-wise gazettes, copies of board resolutions, and other important documents — remained under the jurisdiction of the Telangana Waqf Board for the past ten years. According to the Waqf Act, 1995, and the bifurcation guidelines framed by the Central Government, all records, property details, and related funds pertaining to Andhra Pradesh were supposed to be transferred to the AP Waqf Board. However, the process had not moved forward for several years. AP Waqf Board Chairman Sheikh Abdul Aziz stated that after assuming office, he treated this issue with utmost priority and personally met the Telangana Waqf Board Chairman to focus special attention on the

Significant step towards handing over records to the AP Waqf Board. Progress toward resolving a decade-long pending issue regarding records. Positive development due to the intervention of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Minister N.M.D. Farooq. Efforts underway to secure pending funds along with records. AP Waqf Board Chairman Sheikh Abdul Aziz.

matter. He also held several meetings with the Telangana Waqf Board CEO and other senior officials and pursued the matter through official correspondence. Abdul Aziz further stated that Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Minority Welfare Minister N.M.D. Farooq responded positively and intervened at various levels, extending significant support toward resolving the issue. He said that their intervention enabled rapid progress in this matter. As a result of continuous follow-ups, official-level discussions, and administrative efforts, the Telangana Government finally issued a memo directing the Hyderabad District Collector to

release the record room and hand it over to the Telangana State Waqf Board CEO, which he described as a welcome development. He stated that the Telangana Waqf Board currently possesses 2,971 files related to the AP Waqf Board, along with 8 Survey Commissioner Report books and 3 gazettes. After the record room is vacated and the records are handed over to the Telangana CEO, the AP records will be formally taken into custody. He added that teams from the AP Waqf Board have already been deputed to expedite the identification, inventory preparation, and transfer process of the records. Abdul Aziz also stated that approximately

₹55.5 crore in pending cash balances, deposits, and other financial dues belonging to the AP Waqf Board are yet to be received. He emphasized that these crucial records are essential for the protection of Waqf properties, handling legal cases, survey verification, and uploading details to the Central Government's UMEED portal. He further revealed that efforts are continuing not only to retrieve the records but also to recover pending cash balances, deposits, and other financial dues owed to the AP Waqf Board. Discussions and administrative measures are underway at all levels to ensure that these dues are transferred to the

AP Waqf Board soon. Abdul Aziz asserted that every Waqf property, every record, and every rupee belonging to Andhra Pradesh is the rightful asset of the people, and their struggle to reclaim them fully will continue. He affirmed that there would be no compromise in protecting Waqf properties and that safeguarding these assets for future generations is their responsibility. He expressed special gratitude to Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, Minister N.M.D. Farooq, the Governments of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, the Central Waqf Council, and all concerned officials for their cooperation in this process.

7% quota in jobs and services: West Bengal regularises 66 classes in OBC list

The notification was issued in compliance with a Calcutta High Court order of May 2024, which struck down the OBC status of several communities in West Bengal, calling it illegal. In a major decision that could reshape caste calculations in West Bengal, the BJP government led by Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Tuesday regularised 66 communities that were included in the state's OBC reservation list before 2010. The move comes days after the new government scrapped the existing state OBC list. With the notification, the Backward Classes Welfare Department said these communities, many of whom are Muslim, will now be eligible for 7 per cent reservation in government services and posts.



others. The notification also states that individuals who converted from Scheduled Castes to Christianity and their descendants have been included in the list.

The list includes several traditional and social communities such as Kapali, Kurmi, Nai (Napi), Tanti, Dhanuk, Kasai, Khandaite, Turha, Paharia Muslim, Devanga, Hajjam (Muslim), among

REGULARISATION AFTER 2024 ORDER
The notification was issued in compliance with a Calcutta High Court order of May 2024, which struck down the OBC status of several communities in West Bengal, calling it illegal. The court struck down several classes named under the West Bengal Backward Classes (Other than Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) (Reservation of Vacancies in Services and Posts) Act, 2012.

Congress likely to get 2 berths in Vijay's Tamil Nadu cabinet expansion

Vijay is expected to expand the Tamil Nadu cabinet as consultations with allies continue. The move is set to shape representation ahead of the first Assembly session and the 2026-27 Budget.



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Vijay, is expected to move ahead with a major cabinet expansion. The development comes after the newly formed Tamil Nadu government prepares for its first full-fledged Assembly session and key administrative decisions in the coming weeks. Vijay, who assumed office on May 10 as the new CM, was sworn in along with nine ministers, including N Anand, Aadhav Arjuna and KA Sengottaiyan, marking the beginning of a new political phase in the state. With the government now settling into office, discussions regarding wider representation for alliance

partners and support groups have intensified. During the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam's (TVK) first convention at Vikravandi, Vijay had assured that parties and leaders extending support to his government would receive appropriate representation in governance. Political sources indicate that the Indian National Congress, which joined the alliance after the elections, could be allotted two ministerial berths in the proposed expansion. Leaders associated with the SP Velumani faction, which split from the All India Anna Dravida Munnet-

ra Kazhagam (AIADMK) and later backed the Vijay-led administration, are also expected to secure representation in the ministry. As per sources, the faction may be considered for up to five cabinet positions. Other smaller parties and support groups that backed the government are also believed to be seeking ministerial representation. Consultations with alliance partners and supporting leaders are currently underway as Vijay works towards finalising the structure of the expanded cabinet. Sources said efforts are be-

ing made to conclude discussions and prepare the ministerial list within the next few days.

Political observers expect the ministry to eventually expand to nearly 34 members. Under the proposed arrangement, TVK is likely to retain most of the key portfolios while balancing alliance commitments and caste-regional equations.

The swearing-in ceremony for additional ministers is expected to take place at Raj Bhavan in Chennai, where Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar will administer the oath of office.

The cabinet expansion is expected to be followed by the first Assembly session of the new government, beginning with the Governor's address. The government is also preparing to present the 2026-27 State Budget, which is expected to outline the Vijay administration's policy priorities and governance roadmap.

Odisha Vigilance Finds Crores in Assets During Engineer Raids

BHUBANESWAR, MAY 19

The Odisha Vigilance on Tuesday unearthed movable and immovable assets worth crores of rupees during simultaneous raids on properties linked to the Executive Engineer of the Roads and Buildings Sub-Division, Dharmagarh, over allegations of possessing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.



The accused, identified as Bhubaneswar Sabar, is the Executive Engineer at the Roads and Buildings Sub-Division, Dharmagarh, and the In-charge Executive Engineer, Roads and Buildings Division, Bhawanipatana, in Kalahandi district. "On the allegation of possession of assets disproportionate to the known sources of income, simultaneous house searches were conducted on the properties

of Bhubaneswar Sabar, Executive Engineer, Roads and Buildings Division, Bhawanipatana, on Tuesday, May 19, at six places linked to Sabar in Kalahandi district, including his office and government quarter," said a Vigilance official. As many as six teams of Odisha Vigilance, led by six Deputy Superintendents of Police, eight Inspectors, and other supporting staff, conducted the search on the basis of search warrants issued by

the Court of Special Judge, Vigilance, Bhawanipatana.

During the searches, the officials found Sabar and his family in possession of assets worth crores, including five buildings (four multi-storeyed buildings), 68 plots measuring 65 acres, two farmhouses spanning 17 acres, one market complex with eight cabins, deposits worth Rs 10.72 lakh, one four-wheeler, and cash and household articles worth around Rs 19.78 lakh.

In another case, the anti-corruption sleuths caught Parsuram Naik, the Panchayat Executive Officer of Mirginendi Gram Panchayat under Karanja block in Mayurbhanj district, red-handed while allegedly taking a bribe of Rs 18,000 from a contractual staffer of the same Gram Panchayat to process the file for withdrawal of his arrears remuneration and to further facilitate the withdrawal of regular remuneration.

According to Vigilance

sources, the said staffer had not received his remuneration for the period from March 26, 2023, to April 3, 2025, despite orders issued by the Block Development Officer for the release of the payment. The staffer had repeatedly requested the accused Panchayat Executive Officer, Naik, to release his dues. However, Naik allegedly demanded a bribe of Rs 18,000 for processing the payment. Left with no other option, the staffer approached the Vigilance authorities and lodged a complaint detailing the harassment. Based on the complaint, a trap was laid on Tuesday, during which the accused, Parsuram Naik, Panchayat Executive Officer, was nabbed by the Odisha Vigilance team near Tato Chhak, Karanja, for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 18,000 from the complainant. The entire bribe amount was recovered and seized from Naik's possession in the presence of witnesses.

EDITORIAL

FLAWED BY DESIGN:
THE ECI'S CONTROVERSIAL ROLL
REVISION ENTERS PHASE 3

The Election Commission of India (ECI) is moving ahead with a third phase of its highly contentious Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. This upcoming phase spans 16 States and three Union Territories, directly impacting a massive voting bloc of 36.73 crore citizens. Looking back at the fallout of Phase 2—which saw an astonishing net reduction of 10.2% in the voter registry—it is vital that the commission introduce fundamental structural changes to its methodology. Doing so is the only way to prevent a repeat of the widespread disenfranchisement that marred earlier rounds, particularly in regions like West Bengal. If there is any silver lining this time, it is that the absence of an immediate, impending election means the exercise will at least not be rushed. To date, the SIR has triggered mass voter deletions of varying magnitudes across the country, with West Bengal suffering the most severe cuts. This outcome was not random; it was the direct consequence of the ECI relying on deeply flawed software, arbitrary metrics, and systemic methodological errors. Together, these factors caused a disproportionate removal of voters from marginalized and minority communities, a trend most visible in West Bengal. A closer look at how the SIR was managed across different states reveals three distinct systemic failures. Decision-making power and data control were concentrated heavily within the central ECI leadership in New Delhi, stripping local Electoral Registration Officers in the states of their traditional authority. The ECI chose to execute booth rationalization simultaneously with voter enumeration rather than after it. This structural overlap effectively masked the true scale of the deletions, making it incredibly difficult for citizens to check and verify their status. Software automated errors compounded the issue by wiping out entire blocks of matching names altogether, rather than surgically removing only the duplicate entries.

At the core of this entire crisis is a fundamental flaw in how the enumeration process was designed. It flips the traditional script by shifting the burden of proof onto the everyday citizen to validate their eligibility, rather than requiring ECI officials to justify removals. The mathematical consequences of these systemic flaws are starkly reflected in the data. Nearly every state subjected to the SIR experienced a sharp drop in its female-to-male voter ratio—with Tamil Nadu standing out as the lone exception—alongside massive deviations from officially projected voter-to-population benchmarks.

Despite this glaring evidence, the ECI has shown no willingness to alter its trajectory. The reality that the commission failed to learn from its previous missteps in Bihar during Phase 2 strongly implies that this institutional indifference may be intentional rather than accidental. Equally concerning is the stance of the Supreme Court of India. Rather than stepping in to definitively adjudicate on core constitutional questions—such as the true legal interpretation of Section 21(3) of the Representation of the People Act or the legality of forcing the burden of proof onto voters—the apex court has opted for mere administrative oversight, simply ordering the acceptance of additional ID types and assigning judicial monitors.

As Phase 3 rolls out under these unresolved conditions, the responsibility of safeguarding voting rights has effectively defaulted to political parties and civil society groups. It is now up to them to mobilize, educate, and ensure that citizens' enrollment forms are accurately processed. Ultimately, the Election Commission must re-align its priorities, elevating the constitutional promise of universal adult franchise above a bureaucratic process that penalizes voters for institutional failures.

The Crisis in Healthcare,
now Hospitals Breed Fear

The true strength of a nation is not measured by its military power, economic achievements, technological advancements, or towering infrastructure. It is measured by how sensitively and responsibly it safeguards the life, health, and dignity of its citizens. The healthcare system is the soul of a nation. Hospitals are not merely buildings; they are centers of hope and survival. Doctors are not just professionals; they are compassionate guardians standing between life and death, commanding the deepest trust of society. But when this very healthcare system falls prey to corruption, fraud, profiteering, and unethical practices, public trust begins to collapse, leaving behind fear, uncertainty, and darkness. The recent incidents emerging from India's healthcare sector—particularly those reported from Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan—have exposed this grim and disturbing reality.

India today is moving rapidly toward becoming a developed nation. Ambitious visions such as Developed India 2047, Prosperous India, and Self-Reliant India are being pursued through economic reforms, digital transformation, infrastructure expansion, technological progress, and rising global influence. These achievements inspire optimism. Yet, at the same time, growing irregularities in the healthcare sector—fake doctors, counterfeit medicines, profiteering hospitals, and the commercialization of medical services—raise serious questions about the sustainability and credibility of this development journey. If citizens' lives themselves are not secure, all claims of progress begin to appear hollow.

The exposure of fake doctors appointed in government hospitals in Damoh and Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh is not merely an administrative failure of one state; it symbolizes the vulnerability of the entire healthcare system. Even more alarming was the revelation in the Rajasthan Medical Council, where individuals lacking proper medical education and mandatory internship qualifications were reportedly registered as doctors. This is not simply a procedural lapse—it is a grave crime against human life. When an unqualified individual sits before patients wearing

the identity of a doctor, he does not provide treatment; he conducts dangerous experiments on human lives. Under such circumstances, healing can easily turn into tragedy.

The biggest question is: How do such people enter the system? Can an individual alone execute such large-scale fraud? Certainly not. Behind these scandals lie failures in verification mechanisms, institutional collusion, and systemic corruption. When medical councils, hospital administrations, and registration authorities themselves come under suspicion, it becomes evident that the disease is no longer limited to individuals—it has spread across the system itself. The crisis in healthcare today is not confined only to fake doctors. Profiteering in private hospitals has severely damaged the humanitarian character of medical services. Patients' helplessness is increasingly being converted into economic opportunity. Numerous complaints point toward unnecessary diagnostic tests, unjustified ICU admissions, prolonged ventilator support, inflated bills, and deliberate extension of treatment periods. A patient enters a hospital seeking relief, but many return carrying financial devastation and emotional trauma. Healthcare was originally meant to alleviate suffering; in many places, it has now become a mechanism for commerce and profit.

The condition of government hospitals is equally worrying. Institutions established for the poor and vulnerable often struggle with resource shortages, negligence, corruption, and the interference of middlemen. Free medicines frequently fail to reach patients, medical equipment remains non-functional, diagnostic delays persist, and patients are forced into endless rounds of hospitals and offices. For the poor, illness no longer remains merely a physical burden—it becomes an economic and psychological catastrophe. Another alarming concern is the growing obsession with becoming doctors through shortcuts. Irregularities surrounding examinations such as NEET have already shaken the nation. If admission processes themselves become questionable, and fake degree holders subsequently enter the system, the

credibility of the entire medical profession stands threatened. Becoming a doctor demands years of rigorous education, disciplined training, ethical grounding, and emotional sensitivity. But when merit is replaced by money, corruption, and forgery, the consequences can only be disastrous. This is not merely a healthcare crisis; it is a crisis of national security and social trust.

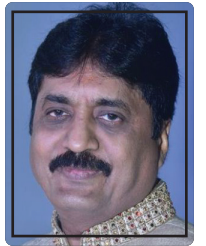
When citizens begin doubting a doctor's qualifications, enter hospitals with fear instead of faith, and question the authenticity of medicines before purchasing them, it signals a dangerous situation for any nation. A collapse of trust in healthcare is nothing less than an injury to the moral soul of society. In many developed nations, crimes related to healthcare are treated with utmost seriousness. Fake medical practitioners face lifetime bans, heavy penalties, and criminal prosecution. Medical registrations and certifications are regularly verified, while strong digital monitoring systems significantly reduce the possibility of fraud. In contrast, investigations in India often become lengthy, complicated, and slow. Cases continue for years while offenders frequently escape accountability. Such delays do not create fear among wrongdoers; they breed impunity. The time has come not merely for concern or formal assurances, but for decisive action.

India urgently needs a live digital database of every registered doctor, enabling citizens to verify qualifications, registration details, medical institutions, and service records instantly. Medical councils must transform from paper-based institutions into active oversight bodies. Hospitals should undergo regular inspections, doctors' credentials should be randomly verified physically, and in cases of fraud, not only fake doctors but also officials and employees involved in document verification should be held equally accountable. Without accountability, reform remains impossible. Simultaneously, medical education must restore ethical values and human sensitivity. Medicine is not merely a profession; it is a sacred service. A doctor's foremost duty should not be profit, but preservation of life. If compassion

disappears from healthcare, machines may survive—but humanity will not.

Today, society is passing through a period of deep fear and insecurity. When protectors become exploiters, when those entrusted with saving lives become threats to life itself, and when hospitals replace trust with suspicion, where should citizens turn? This question is not limited to Madhya Pradesh or Rajasthan—it confronts the entire nation. It is not merely a healthcare problem; it reflects moral decline and social fragmentation. The vision of Developed India 2047 cannot be achieved through economic growth alone. It will become meaningful only when citizens feel safe; when hospitals become centers of hope; when medicines inspire confidence; and when the very mention of a doctor evokes trust and respect. Roads, industries, technology, and capital are important—but human life is paramount. If life itself remains insecure, every dream of development will remain incomplete.

The corruption, fraud, and ethical decay infiltrating the sacred medical profession must be addressed before it becomes irreversible. This is not merely a legal challenge; it is a question of national character. If decisive action is not taken in time, the network of fake practitioners, counterfeit medicines, and profiteering will eventually consume society's trust entirely. In India's journey toward becoming a developed nation, transparency, integrity, accountability, and humanity within the healthcare system are not optional—they are essential. Because where life is not secure, no dream of development can endure.



LALIT GARGG
Writer, Journalist,
Columnist

VEENA OF THE WAITING ROAD
(AN ELEGY OF A SOLDIER'S MOTHER)

Why did you vanish beyond the valleys of gold,
Leaving my doorway desolate and cold?
Why did your footsteps abandon this lane,
Where even the dust still murmurs your name?
Like mango blossoms after summer rain,
You drift through my spirit—
A fragrance of immortal pain.
You faded into twilight's sea,
Yet eternally still breathes through me.
I wait...
Where dawn unties her saffron hair
Across the silent brows of prayer.
I wait...
Where tamarind leaves in trembling rhyme
Recite your memory to passing time.
I know—
One sacred day your shadow shall return,
Like monsoon clouds for which dry rivers burn.
So I keep the courtyard washed in light,
The threshold garlanded every night,
The lamp awake till stars grow pale,
Its flame still guarding your unfinished tale.
Everything beloved waits for you—
The jasmine scent, the silver dew,
The wind that wanders near the gate,
And one old mother teaching her soul to wait.
Salted mango steeped in tamarind tears,
Buttermilk cooled by forgotten years,
Aviyal breathing village grace,
Thorans glowing on earthen plates,
Sambar singing its spiced refrain,
Pappadum crackling like monsoon rain,
Fruit milk sweet as childhood streams,
Thumbapoo rice perfumed with dreams—
Every flavor whispers your name.
Every aroma becomes a flame.
But while the feast glowed warm and bright,
You marched into the jaws of night.
Without fearing snow that fractures bone,
Without fearing death that walks alone,
Without surrendering thirst or scars,
You guarded the nation beneath frozen stars.
The rifle rested upon your chest,
Yet Bharat burned within your breath.
You stood where mountains swallow cries,
Where even courage kneels and dies.
To you,
The motherland was never mere soil—
It was sacred blood and timeless toil.
It was temple bell and battle drum,
The womb from which all heavens come.
You carried the tricolor in your veins
Like thunder trapped in monsoon rains.
Then Time arrived—
A thief clothed in shadow and flame—
And softly whispered your fearless name.

One bullet shattered the mountain air;
Another tore through a mother's prayer.
Eyes once bright as rising suns
Closed forever beneath the guns.
The battlefield fell deathly still,
As though even silence had lost its will.
"Open your eyes once more, my son!"
A mother cried to the merciless wind.
"See—your home still waits awake...
The lamp still burns beside your plate...
Your footsteps still echo through these walls...
Come once more before the darkness falls..."
But only silence crossed the snow,
Cold as a moon denied its glow.
O golden child of fearless flame,
You left before the feast became
A single morsel upon your tongue—
For destiny called while life was young.
The hands that cooked with trembling care
Prepared instead the funeral prayer.
The firewood rose like broken skies;
The rifles thundered their last goodbyes.
Bugles wept through the evening air
Like wounded birds of despair.
Yet amid oceans of grief untold,
A mother stood—unbroken, bold.
She closed her eyes not in defeat,
But pride that made her sorrow complete.
"For my motherland,
My son became eternal."
And through tears burning like sacred oil,
She whispered unto heaven's soil:
"If another birth awaits my soul,
Let him return to the same patrol.
Let me again become his mother,
And send him smiling toward the border."
Now the moon ascends in silver fire,
Wearing your memory ever higher.
The stars stand guard in endless rows
Like soldiers no defeat ever knows.
Still I remain beside this road,
Carrying love's immortal load.
Do not vanish beyond the years,
Do not hide behind my tears.
For every wind that roams the night
Still brings your footsteps back in light.
And till my final breath is gone,
Till the final star dissolves at dawn,
I shall wait—
Beside the road...
Beside remembrance...
Beside the undying flame
Of your immortal name.
Where mothers become monuments,
And sons become eternity.

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

Partition Dreams & Parking Nightmares:
The Decline of Karol Bagh

A few years ago, stepping into a bustling South Indian restaurant in Karol Bagh felt like entering a literary world. Hindi and Punjabi writers, poets, and thinkers would gather around tables, engaged in endless debates. Sahitya Akademi award winner Dr. Harbhajan Singh, Kartar Singh Duggal, Mahindra Kaur Gill, Harnam Singh, and many others turned the space into a hub of creativity. It is said that Gulzar began writing poetry after striking up a friendship with Harnam Singh in these very lanes of Karol Bagh.

from Pakistan with nothing but broken dreams. They settled here, opened small shops, and rebuilt their lives with remarkable grit. Their efforts breathed life into the market, turning it into a symbol of hope and renewal. What makes Karol Bagh special is its diversity. It is not just a Punjabi market. South Indian communities have long thrived here, adding their flavours, traditions, and culinary heritage. Namdhari Sikh brothers and sisters bring their characteristic simplicity and hard work, enriching the shared cultural fabric of Delhi. In these lanes, the city's

experience on Ajmal Khan Road and let Karol Bagh breathe freely again. Murlu Mani, President of the Beopar Mandal of Karol Bagh, voices the frustration of the business community: "It is high time that due to poor parking facilities in our Karol Bagh coupled with encroachments, it is in a very bad shape. Now people think twice to visit here. This situation is killing the business and charm of Karol Bagh." Old Charm Meets New Shine Time has brought visible changes. Many old showrooms have given

purchased sarees, lehengas and other items for their daughters and would-be daughters-in-law from here. All apparel and fashion accessories sold there were of premium quality," recalls Rajesh Vachher, a real estate consultant in Karol Bagh. The small street nearby is still called Zohra Street, a lasting tribute to its goodwill. Nearby, at 28 Regarpura, stood the office of Prof. Arora of "Rishte Hi Rishte- Ek Baar Mil To Le" fame. His matrimonial services were legendary. For decades, walls along rail tracks near Delhi carried his graffiti advertisements. Anyone above 40 would remember them. Thanks to Prof. Arora, countless marriages were solemnised.



Today, that restaurant has closed, and those vibrant literary gatherings have faded into memory. You no longer see Mahashay Dharampal Gulati, founder of MDH spices, walking barefoot through Karol Bagh. For him, the market was sacred like a temple, a place where he lived, worked, and rose to legendary heights. His simplicity and dedication remain part of the folklore here. Generations of Delhiites have found joy in these lanes—the lively sparkle of Ajmal Khan Road, the bustling energy of Gaffar Market, and the intimate warmth of narrow alleys that together form Delhi's beating heart.

composite culture truly comes alive. Yet, one persistent issue casts a shadow over this evolution: the severe shortage of parking. Narrow lanes, a surging number of vehicles, and the absence of adequate parking facilities are driving customers away. Shopkeepers wear expressions of quiet sadness, their eyes reflecting a longing to restore the market's old vibrancy. The Parking Pain: Decades of Neglect The multi-level parking project at Shastri Park has remained stuck for over three and a half decades. Designed to accommodate more than 500 cars, it has become a glaring example of administrative apathy. A fresh proposal by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) for a facility with capacity for 577 cars at an estimated cost of Rs101 crore has sparked some hope, but concrete action is still awaited. If implemented, it would dramatically improve

way to big national and international brands. Ajmal Khan Road has emerged as a paradise for affordable branded garments, embroidery, and fashion. In 2019, it was converted into a pedestrian zone, allowing shoppers to stroll comfortably. Gaffar Market has transformed into a complete electronics hub, offering mobiles, laptops, and gadgets at competitive wholesale prices. The warmth of legacy shops now blends with the polish of modern retail, creating a unique fusion of old and new. Fading Icons and Enduring Legacy The market's struggles are visible in the closure of iconic establishments. Zohra Emporium, a formidable name in ladies' outfits for over six decades, is now history. Thousands of families once bought sarees, lehengas, and premium fashion accessories there. "Zohra Emporium established a name for itself. Thousands of parents have

A Call to Revive Delhi's Shared Heritage Karol Bagh is more than a shopping destination. It is a living testament to the pain and resilience of Partition, where refugees rebuilt lives, Mahashay Gulati walked barefoot in devotion, and literary giants like Amrita Pritam shaped words. It embodies Delhi's soul-hard work, emotion, and shared heritage. Solving the parking crisis is essential to restoring its glory. With better infrastructure, customers will return, shops will bustle once more, and the blend of old memories and new energy will flourish. Shopkeepers, the administration, and citizens must unite to protect this historic market. Whenever you walk through Karol Bagh, pause for a moment. Think of the countless dreams this place has nurtured. The time has come to make it lively again. Karol Bagh deserves nothing less.



VIVEK SHUKLA

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu attends National Review Meeting on Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban 2.0

Deputy CM explains Telangana's initiatives towards scientific waste management, sustainable urban development and circular economy

NEW DELHI, MAY 19:

Deputy Chief Minister of Telangana, Shri Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu, attended the two-day National Review Meeting on "Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban 2.0" inaugurated by Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Shri Manohar Lal Khattar at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on Tuesday. The meeting was organised to strengthen urban sanitation, cleanliness and solid waste management systems across the country.

On the first day of the meeting, extensive discussions were held on urban cleanliness, sanitation, solid waste management, door-to-door waste collection, scientific processing of waste, remediation of legacy dump sites, waste-to-energy projects, PPP models and implementation of the new Solid Waste Management Rules. States and cities also shared their best practices and experiences in urban waste management.

Addressing the meeting, Deputy Chief Minister Shri Bhatti Vikramarka explained the scientific waste management systems, sustainable urban development initiatives, sanitation programmes and circular economy measures being implemented in Telangana.

He stated that under the leadership of Chief Minister Shri Revanth Reddy, the Telangana Government is working towards building a sustainable, inclusive and environmentally responsible future in line with Telangana Vision–2047. He said the State is following the development

framework of CURE, PURE and RARE, giving equal importance to the balanced growth of Core Urban Regions, Peri-Urban Regions and Rural Agricultural Regions.

The Deputy Chief Minister observed that solid waste management is no longer limited to waste collection alone, but is directly linked to climate response, environmental sustainability, circular economy, employment generation and economic productivity. He said the recently introduced Solid Waste Management Rules–2026 by the Central Government are bringing transformative changes in the country's waste management ecosystem. He explained that the new rules focus not only on conventional waste collection and dumping, but also on 4-way source segregation, decentralised waste processing, scientific remediation of old dump yards, waste-to-energy generation, technology-based monitoring, circular economy practices, ward-level accountability and public participation. Telangana, he said, had already initiated several such reforms even before the rules formally came into effect. The Deputy Chief Minister informed that Telangana Government is introducing around 9,596 electric Swachh Auto 'Tippers' in core urban regions. These electric vehicles will help reduce carbon emissions from municipal operations and promote cleaner transportation systems. He said the vehicles are being designed with separate compartments to facilitate 4-way source segregation and QR-code based

monitoring for efficient door-to-door waste collection. He further stated that Telangana is prioritising decentralised and distributed waste processing systems. Wet waste is being processed closer to the point of generation, while dry waste is scientifically segregated and channelled into recycling and circular economy systems, thereby minimising the volume of waste reaching landfills. Transporting wet waste over long distances within cities is not only economically expensive but also environmentally unsustainable, he noted. Therefore, decentralised wet waste processing centres are being established to scientifically process waste at the local level itself. This, he said, would also improve the quality of RDF (Refuse-Derived Fuel) supplied to waste-to-energy plants. The Deputy Chief Minister stated that scientific remediation of legacy dump yards is a major priority for the Telangana Government. In the case of the Jawaharnagar dump yard in Hyderabad, technical assistance and advisory support are being obtained from IIT Bombay. The objective, he said, is not merely cosmetic intervention, but the



creation of a long-term environmental management and continuous monitoring system. He also informed that around 22 lakh metric tonnes of waste spread over nearly 40 acres at the Autonagar dump site are being processed through biominning, with nearly 30 percent of the waste already processed. The reclaimed land, he said, would not be re-used for dumping, but developed into parks, sports facilities and public infrastructure in the future. "Our goal is to transform dump yards into development centres," the Deputy Chief Minister asserted. Under the 99-Day Praja Palana–Pragathi Action Plan, urban local bodies and district administrations have undertaken large-scale sanitation drives across the State, he said. These include removal of garbage vulnerable points, QR-based pilot monitoring of Swachh Autos in two wards, clearance of 1,000.72 metric tonnes of construction and demolition waste, special sanitation drives in public spaces, removal of legacy waste and city-wide e-waste collection campaigns. He clarified that these are not isolated sanitation activities, but

part of an integrated urban development strategy aligned with Telangana Vision–2047.

Referring to international best practices, Shri Bhatti Vikramarka said the proposed Eco-Town project at Bandaraviryala and Siddapur, inspired by the Kitakyushu model of Japan, would become a significant milestone in Telangana's circular economy journey.

He stated that Telangana is prepared to play a major role in achieving the national goal of transforming India into a 30–35 trillion dollar economy by 2047, with the State pursuing its own target of becoming a 3 trillion dollar economy.

The Deputy Chief Minister noted that Telangana has consistently improved its performance in Swachh Survekshan and national urban sanitation rankings, reflecting the collective efforts of citizens, sanitation workers, urban local bodies and the Government.

He emphasised that cleanliness is not merely about the appearance of cities, but is intrinsically linked to public health, human dignity and quality of life. Inspired by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, Telangana Government is treating cleanliness as a core public value.

Calling for a "War on Waste – Waste to Wealth" approach, he said waste management should evolve beyond sanitation into an economic value creation movement. Scientific segregation and processing of waste at source can transform waste into wealth, he added.

The Deputy Chief Minister

also stressed the importance of inculcating cleanliness and environmental responsibility among children from an early age. He suggested that all States may consider introducing practical education on cleanliness, waste segregation and environmental responsibility in schools from Class-I onwards, on the lines of Japan.

He appealed to the Central Government to extend financial support to States for implementing waste-to-energy, recycling and circular economy projects. In particular, he requested positive consideration for viability gap funding to establish modern infrastructure and scientific waste processing units in this sector.

Shri Bhatti Vikramarka expressed confidence that Telangana, with the cooperation of citizens, urban local bodies, sanitation workers, industries and institutions, would emerge as a national model in sustainable urban management, scientific waste management and circular economy development.

Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Shri Manohar Lal Khattar, Minister of State Shri Tokhan Sahu, Secretary Shri Srinivas Katikithala, Swachh Bharat Mission Director Smt. Roopa Mishra, Telangana Municipal Administration and Urban Development Special Chief Secretary Shri Jayesh Ranjan, Chief Minister's Secretary Shri Manik Raj, GHMC Commissioner Shri R.V. Karnan and Ministers and senior officials from various States participated in the meeting.



DHR Literature Festival 2026 Concludes

Successfully with Grand Cultural Finale

MALIGAON, 19 MAY, 2026

The Northeast Frontier Railway proudly announced the successful conclusion of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR) Literature Festival 2026, organized by the DHR in collaboration with the creative collective Poets of Community. The three-day literary and cultural festival, held from 15th to 17th May, 2026, culminated on 18th May, 2026 with a grand valedictory and certificate distribution ceremony celebrating the enthusiastic participation of students, youth and members of the local community. The festival successfully fulfilled its vision of bringing together the industrial heritage of the UNESCO World Heritage Darjeeling Himalayan Railway with the rich oral and literary traditions of the Himalayan region. Through a vibrant blend of literature, music, storytelling and community interaction, the festival created a meaningful cultural platform that highlighted the region's diverse artistic heritage. The festival events were organized across Kurseong and Darjeeling and witnessed active participation from writers, artists, students and literature enthusiasts. On the opening day at Victoria Boys' School, Kurseong, noted author and IIT Roorkee alumna Megha Mittal conducted an engaging workshop titled "Why Poetry is Boring?", encouraging students to explore po-

etry as a contemporary and expressive art form. The second day featured the unique "Rail & Rhythm: The Open-Deck Experience", combining a scenic steam locomotive journey aboard the heritage Toy Train with live musical performances by regional artists. The programme was followed by an interactive folklore and storytelling session at Café De Central, Kurseong, celebrating the oral traditions of the Himalayan communities. The concluding day at Café House, Darjeeling showcased multilingual literary performances in Nepali, English and Hindi, where writers and artists reflected upon the cultural heritage, identity and contemporary realities of the Himalayan region through poetry, storytelling and spoken-word presentations. To mark the successful completion of the festival, a special certificate distribution ceremony was organized on 18th May, 2026. Certificates of appreciation and participation were presented to children, students, performers and community members who actively contributed to the workshops, storytelling sessions and cultural performances. The initiative reflects the continued commitment of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway and Northeast Frontier Railway towards preserving the cultural heritage of the hills while encouraging creative engagement among the younger generation and local communities.



Uday Borwankar honored three employees

GORAKHPUR, MAY 19:

In Northeast Frontier Railway, Gorakhpur, on May 19, 2026, General Manager Uday Borwankar honored three employees in the General Manager's conference hall by declaring them "Safety Star of the Month" for their outstanding performance in the field of safety. The employees were awarded cash prizes and certificates of appreciation. Among the awardees was Mohammad Ahmad, working as a Pointsman at Parsa Tiwari station under the Lucknow Division. On March 1, 2026, while on duty, he noticed something hanging from the third wagon from the rear of an up goods train passing through the station. He immediately informed the Station Master, following which the train was stopped at Swami Narayan Chhapiya station. After inspection, the hanging part was secured properly and the train was allowed to proceed safely. Mohammad Ahmad's alertness and presence of mind helped avert a possible accident. Another awardee, Mr. Anil Kumar, working as Station Master at Kachhwa Road station under the Varanasi Division, noticed brake binding in the fourth coach ahead of the LSRD coach of Train No. 12581 on March 23, 2026, while the train was

passing through the station. Due to the brake binding, all four wheels of the coach had turned red hot. Mr. Anil Kumar immediately showed a red signal and contacted the loco pilot and guard through walkie-talkie, resulting in the train being stopped between Hardattpur and Raja Talab stations. The brake binding was released by the train manager and the train resumed its journey safely, thereby preventing a major accident. His prompt action reflected exceptional vigilance and alertness. The third awardee, Mr. Zakir Hussain, working as a gateman at Level Crossing No. 3/C under Bhojipura station in the Izzatnagar Division, noticed sparks coming from the wheels of the engine while an up goods train was passing on March 15, 2026. He immediately stopped the train. Upon inspection, a wire was found stuck in the wheel, which was removed before the train was allowed to continue. His attentiveness and vigilance helped prevent a possible mishap. The alertness, dedication, and sense of duty displayed by these railway employees were described as exemplary. For their commendable service, General Manager Uday Borwankar honored them with cash awards and certificates of appreciation.

Rahul Gandhi Targets Modi Over Norway Fund's Adani Exit

In February 2026, Norway's \$1.2 trillion sovereign wealth fund, the world's largest, decided to exclude Adani Green Energy Ltd. from its portfolio due to concern about its alleged links to financial crime

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday (May 19, 2026) took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, asking if Norway agreed to his "personal request" to remove Adani from the pension fund black list.

Mr. Gandhi posed his query after Norway's sovereign wealth fund dropped Adani Green from its portfolio in February. "We get very good information these days. Modi ji, did Norway agree to your personal request to remove Adani from their pension fund black list?" Mr. Gandhi said in a post on X.

He used a picture of news reports: one from February 27 saying, "Norway's sovereign wealth fund drops Adani Green Energy from its portfolio" and another from May 18 saying "PM Modi be-

gins historic Norway visit - the first by an Indian Prime Minister in 43 years".

In February this year, the \$1.2 trillion sovereign wealth fund, the world's largest, decided to exclude Adani Green Energy Ltd. (AGEL) from its portfolio due to concern about its alleged links to financial crime.

Norges Bank, which had in May 2024 excluded Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited, on its website added AGEL to the list of companies that it has decided to exclude from its portfolio. It cited "gross corruption or other serious financial crime" as the criterion for its decision but gave no explanation.

When Norges Bank first bought AGEL shares in July 2020, the share price was ₹341 and on February 27 it was ₹944. While AGEL did not immediately offer any comments, industry officials said a fossil fuel-funded sovereign fund was trying to create a narrative against a renewable energy company.

Assam govt to impose fine for delay in pension disbursement to retired staff

GUWAHATI, MAY 19

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Tuesday that the state government has introduced a stricter accountability framework to ensure timely disbursement of pensions to retired government employees, including financial penalties for officials responsible for undue delays in pension processing.

Sharing the development in a post on social media platform X, the Chief Minister noted that retired government employees had played a vital role in Assam's development and deserved dignity and respect in their post-retirement life. "Our retired employees have contributed richly to Assam's progress. It is their right to receive timely pension. To achieve this, we're

enforcing an accountability framework, which also imposes a penalty on those responsible for delays. Our pensioners deserve respect and dignity," Chief Minister Sarma said. The announcement came after the Administrative Reforms, Training, Pension and Public Grievances Department issued a notification introducing penalty provisions for delays in pension processing.

According to the notification, penalties will be imposed on Heads of Offices (HOOs) if pen-



enforcing an accountability framework, which also imposes a penalty on those responsible for delays. Our pensioners deserve respect and dignity," Chief Minister Sarma said. The announcement came after the Administrative Reforms, Training, Pension and Public Grievances Department issued a notification introducing penalty provisions for delays in pension processing.

Officials said a list of delayed pension cases would now be generated every month through the Kritagyata portal and circulated among concerned departments, district commissioners and senior departmental secretaries for monitoring and action.

The notification also said that financial recovery would be made at the

rate of Rs 250 per day from officials responsible for delays at different stages of pension processing, subject to a maximum ceiling of Rs 5,000.

The recovery amount will reportedly be deducted directly through the FinAssam portal from the salary bills of the concerned officials and reflected in the following month's salary statement.

The order also directed Drawing and Disbursing Officers to ensure implementation of the recovery provisions and furnish details of such recoveries to the Administrative Reforms, Training, Pension and Public Grievances Department.

Officials said the new mechanism aims to improve administrative efficiency and strengthen accountability in government offices while ensuring that pensioners receive their dues without unnecessary delays.

CM Reviews Progress of Mhari Sadak App

CHANDIGARH, MAY 19

Haryana Chief Minister, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini has directed that in all districts of the state, at least one major complaint received on the "Mhari Sadak App" must be mandatorily reviewed in public grievance meetings and in monthly review meetings chaired by Deputy Commissioners. The objective is to enhance the usefulness of the app and ensure strict action against officers showing negligence in grievance redressal.

The Chief Minister gave these directions while chairing a review meeting regarding the "Mhari Sadak App" on Tuesday. During the meeting, officers apprised the Chief Minister that the second version of the app was launched in December 2025. Besides this, officers from HARTRON further apprised the Chief Minister on 17 key issues raised in the Apex committee meeting held on May 11 and

the steps taken on them.

The Chief Minister was further apprised that under the mapping of various departments in Haryana, a total of 1,43,065 roads, covering approximately 63,389 kilometres, have been mapped on the "Mhari Sadak App" so far.

The Chief Minister directed that the geo-tagging of roads be completed with speed and accuracy. Officers further informed that 31,939 complaints have been resolved through the app so far.

The Chief Minister was further apprised about the download status of the app on Android and iOS platforms. Around 25 officers from PWD, NHAI, HARTRON and other departments remained present in the meeting.

The Chief Minister reviewed complaints and action taken reports from all departments. He directed that greater public awareness should be created about the "Mhari Sadak App". He specifically



Haryana Chief Minister, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini presiding over a meeting regarding 'Mhari Sadak App' at Chandigarh on May 19, 2026.

directed that taxi drivers associated with aggregator companies such as Ola and Uber should also be informed about the benefits of the app.

The Chief Minister further directed that drivers visiting RTO offices for taxi passing should be asked to download the app on their mobile phones so that they can directly report road conditions to the government and concerned departments.

Strict action against agencies and officers
During the meeting, the Chief Minister directed strict action against those show-

ing negligence in addressing road-related complaints received through the "Mhari Sadak App" and the Chief Minister's Office. He stated that if any contractor fails to repair roads under the Defect Liability Period (DLP), their bank guarantee should be confiscated. If a firm faces such action three times, it should be blacklisted.

Taking serious note of pending complaints, the Chief Minister directed action against more than a dozen officers and employees who had shown laxity in their work. **Focus on short-term ten-**

ders and border areas

The Chief Minister directed that complaints received on the app must be resolved on a priority basis. He said that tender processes for road construction and repair often take considerable time, and therefore directed that a short-term tender system should be adopted. He further directed that work should begin within 10 days of bid submission to ensure timely road improvement for the public. He also emphasized special attention on the maintenance and development of roads in interstate border areas of Haryana.

Accountability of officers to be ensured

The Chief Minister directed to fix accountability of officers regarding road quality and maintenance. He also directed beautification works such as painting of bridges and walls to enhance the appearance of road infrastructure. Officers were directed

Norway arrests Chinese citizen for suspected espionage

LONDON

Norway has arrested a Chinese national on suspicion of attempted espionage. This is the second such case reported this month, a report has highlighted. Eirik Veum, a media spokesman for the interior security service PST, said that the man was suspected of trying to conduct "illegal intelligence activities in Nordland." Later, the man was remanded in custody for four weeks. The Chinese citizen has denied the allegations, UK-based Independent reported.

Earlier, a woman was accused of using a firm registered in Norway "as a cover for an attempt by a Chinese state actor to establish a receiving station to download data from satellites in the polar orbit," according to PST prosecutor Thomas Blom.

Blom said that the suspect, identified as a Chinese woman, allegedly tried to create a "receiver for downloads from satellites in polar orbits suitable for collecting data that could harm fundamental Norwegian interests if it becomes known to a foreign state," adding that it had "complicity in an attempt at serious espionage against state secrets."

Police said several people had been charged in that case. However, the police did not reveal the nationalities or whether they had been detained, The Independent reported. At the time, Norwegian authorities had carried out searches at two places related to the arrest, a site on a northern island hosting the Andoya Spaceport, an important part of Europe's space ambitions and another in Inland in the south.

Earlier in February, a California-based political operative has been sentenced to four years in federal prison for acting as a covert agent of the People's Republic of China and influencing local US politics.

Italy places Villa Pamphili under special surveillance for PM Modi-Meloni summit

ROME

Security planning has already been implemented for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Rome. It will be a busy stay with institutional engagements with the highest state authorities and, according to Adnkronos, the police have implemented a "specific security system" that takes into account the "geography and character of the locations" for "each stop".

PM Modi is scheduled to arrive in the capital this evening. Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani will welcome him at Fiumicino Airport at 7:30 p.m. Security at the Rome airport has already been increased, Adnkronos news agency reported. PM Modi will be staying at the Anantara Hotel in Piazza della Repubblica, and that area, which will be patrolled by law enforcement, has also been subjected to special checks.

Russia to consider NATO's strengthening nuclear potential in its military planning

MOSCOW

Russia will take the strengthening of NATO's overall nuclear potential into account in its military planning, the country's Deputy Foreign Minister said on Tuesday.

"We cannot ignore the obvious strengthening of the nuclear component of NATO's overall potential, which is in fact occurring as a result of Europe's efforts to develop its own nuclear capabilities in addition to the US's corresponding 'umbrella,'" Sergei Ryabkov, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, was quoted as saying by Russia's leading Tass news agency during an interview with local media.

He also said that the strategic risks of a "head-on clash" be-

India one of the greatest powers, says Denmark PM Frederiksen

OSLO

Spotlighting India's position as a major global player, Denmark's Mette Frederiksen on Tuesday said that Nordic countries' cooperation with "one of the greatest powers" can bring stability, prosperity, and unity amid global uncertainties.

"There is this idea growing right now that the middle powers in the world should act together, stick together, and work together. We cannot say that India is a middle power. You are one of the biggest powers. It's not very easy to say that the Nordic countries are middle powers because we are too small to be middle powers. But when we are united, the Nordic countries, then we are a middle power. And working together with one of the greatest powers on these clear ideas and values, I think we can bring stability, prosperity, and unity into a world that is changing rapidly and unfortunately not in the right direction," Frederiksen stated while addressing a joint press conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and leaders of other Nordic nations

in Oslo on Tuesday. As the third India-Nordic Summit concluded, Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store said the discussions centred on strengthening support for international law and advancing a rules-based order that requires reform and progress.

He also highlighted the importance of a just and lasting peace in Ukraine and the need for a diplomatic resolution to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

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countries and India and the European Union and India," Store said.

Swedish PM Ulf Kristersson thanked PM Modi for strong cooperation, both bilaterally and in the Nordic framework.

"I want to thank you for the excellent cooperation we have and the close partnerships bilaterally, but also in the Nordic format. We all are convinced and excited about the fact that the new opportunities that the EU-India free trade agreement will bring, both to India and to Europe as a whole. And finally, I think there is a good room for expanding our partnerships in investments, in innovation, in diplomacy, and also in defence cooperation," he stated.

Recalling his recent visit to India with President Alexander Stubb, Finnish PM Petteri Orpo said that Nordic nations share common priorities with India, including strengthening the rules-based international order and addressing climate change with sustained multilateral action. "I also had a good bilateral discussion with Prime Minister Modi. There is a great momentum in our re-

lations. Both President Stubb and I had the pleasure of visiting India earlier this year. Earlier this spring, we had established a strategic partnership in digitalisation and sustainability. Finland is committed to bringing this partnership into concrete actions," said Orpo.

Iceland's Prime Minister Kristrun Frostadottir said the summit is taking place at a significant moment, underscoring how Nordic countries that are geographically distant from India are connected through shared interests and can come together as partners.

"And so I think this summit comes at a very poignant time for us. We can show that even though we're miles apart as a grouping, from India, and also for a country like Iceland, which is very different in scale and size, there are so many things that tie us together. Obviously on our end, Prime Minister Modi mentioned our expertise when it comes to geothermal energy, and renewables are something that we are very happy to share, and we know that we are getting things in return."

India, Nordic countries elevate ties to Green Technology and Innovation Strategic Partnership

OSLO

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on Tuesday that India and Nordic countries have decided to elevate ties to Green Technology and Innovation Strategic Partnership.

Addressing a joint press meet with leaders of the Nordic countries following their third India-Nordic Summit in Oslo on Tuesday, PM Modi said, "Today, we decided to give India-Nordic relations the form of Green Technology and Innovation Strategic Partnership. With this Green Technology Partnership, we will connect Iceland's expertise in geothermal and fisheries, Norway's expertise in blue economy and Arctic, and all Nordic countries' expertise in maritime and sustainability to India's skills to ensure a better future



for the entire world."

"With the formation of this unique Strategic Partnership between us, we will connect Sweden's advance manufacturing and defence, Finland's telecom and digital technology and Denmark's cyber security and health tech with India's talent to develop trusted solutions for the entire world," he added.

He termed extensive research

and innovation ties an "important pillar" of India-Nordic partnership. He announced India and Nordic countries will increase linkages between universities, labs and startup ecosystems. He announced that both sides will deepen cooperation in Arctic and polar research.

PM Modi stated that investment funds from Nordic countries are becoming key partners

in India's rapid growth. He said that the recently concluded India-European Free Trade Agreement will usher in a new "golden era" in ties between India and Nordic countries.

"In 10 years, our bilateral trade has increased almost four-times. Investment funds from Nordic countries are also becoming key partners in India's rapid growth. In the last decade, investment from Nordic countries into India has increased by almost 200 percent. The rapidly growing trade and investment have not only contributed to India's growth story, but have also played a very positive role in the economies of the Nordic countries and created thousands of new jobs. We have recently taken some important initiatives to take it to the next level," PM Modi said.

Over 175 ISIS fighters killed in joint US-led airstrikes in Nigeria

ABUJA

The death toll among Islamic State fighters in Nigeria has risen to 175 after several days of joint airstrikes between Nigeria and the United States in the country's northeast. More than "175 ISIS militants were eliminated on the battlefield," Nigeria's army spokesman Samaila Uba said in a statement on Tuesday.

"The joint strikes destroyed checkpoints, weapons depots, logistics centres, military equipment, and the headquarters of financial networks used to support terrorist operations," he added. Since 2009, the jihadist insurgency led by Boko Haram and subsequently the Islamic State of West Africa Province (ISWAP) has killed more than 40,000 people and



displaced over two million people in the northeast of the country, according to the United Nations, Adnkronos news agency reported.

Military cooperation between Abuja and Washington has been intensifying for several months. "The Nigerians have

played a crucial role over the past few months: they identified the target, helped us gather intelligence, and provided the support necessary to complete this mission," AFRICOM Commander Dagvin Anderson told a congressional hearing in Washington. Last week, Ni-

gerian President Bola Tinubu said that Abu-Bilal al-Minuki, second-in-command of the Islamic State (IS) globally, was eliminated in an overnight operation jointly carried out by Nigerian and US forces.

In a statement, Tinubu described the joint operation as

"a significant example of effective collaboration in the fight against terrorism," which dealt a heavy blow to the ranks of the IS. He said early assessments confirmed the elimination of the wanted senior leader, also known as Abu-Mainok, along with several of his lieutenants, during a strike on his compound in the Lake Chad Basin.

On Friday (US time), US President Donald Trump said on Truth Social that the IS leader had been killed in a joint operation by US and Nigerian forces.

"Tonight, at my direction, brave American forces and the Armed Forces of Nigeria flawlessly executed a meticulously planned and very complex mission to eliminate the most active terrorist in the world from the battlefield," Trump stated.

Women, religious and gender minorities face digital intimidation in Pakistan: Report

ISLAMABAD

Vulnerable groups - women, religious and gender minorities face digital intimidation in Pakistan, a new report by Digital Rights Foundation (DRF) has revealed. The report has identified sextortion, hacking and deepfake imagery as emergent dangers.

"Online-brokered identity-centric harm is further magnified via algorithms and other social media undercurrents. Between May 2024 and December 2025, the DRF's helpline tackled 5,041 new cases. Its survey showed that 64pc received a swift response, 93pc were advised digital safety and 92pc reported lower risk after support," an editorial in Pakistan's daily Dawn mentioned.

"The impact of online abuse is as multilayered as is its tangible version. So are its consequences. Switched-off devices are no solution. The state must clean up the internet environment, especially for marginalised sections, with targeted campaigns to spread awareness about digital safety," it added.

The DRF has called for using digital tools to fix compromised accounts, hacking, blackmail, fraud and image-based violations, according to an editorial in Dawn.



Harassment in Pakistan's digital space occurs through coded language, slang, political and faith-based insinuations, and "context-specific hate campaigns", according to DRF's security helpline.

Earlier in April, the latest annual report by the Digital Rights Foundation (DRF) revealed that online abuse in Pakistan is evolving faster than the systems designed to contain it.

"The main factor is Artificial Intelligence, which is transforming harassment into something more scalable, more anonymous and far harder to trace. The most disturbing consequence: children, some as young as six, are now being pulled into an ecosystem of harm that the state is woefully unprepared to confront. The numbers alone are alarming, but they do not capture the full extent of the crisis. Even as 79 per cent of cyber harassment cases are referred to the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA).

Taiwan's exclusion from WHA exposes Chinese manipulation of global legal order: Report

TAIPEI

The World Health Assembly (WHA) has become a platform for China's manipulation of the UN system and international legal order amid Beijing's efforts to disrupt the cross-strait "status quo", local media reported, citing the Foundation of Medical Professionals Alliance in Taiwan (MPAT).

The World Health Organization's 79th annual WHA began on Monday in Geneva, with Taiwan not receiving an invitation for the 10th consecutive year, following its last participation as an observer in 2016. The assembly's General Committee and the Plenary Session once again turned down a proposal seeking Taiwan's invitation to attend the WHA as an observer, a report in Taipei Times highlighted on Tuesday.

During a plenary hearing on Taiwan's participation in the WHA, the assembly heard China and Pakistan argue for its continued exclusion, while Taiwanese allies Palau and Paraguay expressed support for Taiwan's inclusion.

According to MPAT, China referred to the three core tenets of its "one China" principle, asserting that there is only one China in the world, that Taiwan is a part of China and that it is the only legitimate government representing the whole of China.

The alliance said that Beijing further twisted the meaning of UN Resolution 2758. Adopted in 1971, the resolution recognised the People's



Republic of China as the only legitimate government, enabling it to replace Taiwan as a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

MPAT executive director Lin Shih-chia said that Beijing repeatedly accuses Taiwan of disrupting the "status quo", while it is China that is manipulating the cross-strait relations and leveraging the UN and the WHA to escalate tensions.

The report noted that China's position was echoed by Pakistan, which argued that the issue "falls beyond the mandate" of the WHA and called on member states to rather concentrate on the technical health agenda. On the other hand, Palau and Paraguay backed Taiwan, dismissing China's interpretation of Resolution 2758, highlighting Taiwan's contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Stressing that the issue is not a political but a "public health imperative", Palau said that exclusion of Taiwan "weakens global disease surveillance, delays information sharing and undermines collective preparedness".

Holy relic exposition in Ladakh highlights India's soft power push: Report

NEW DELHI

The Buddha Purnima celebrations and holy relic exposition in Ladakh this year represented far more than a religious event, showcasing India's growing emphasis on combining heritage, spirituality, diplomacy, and cultural identity as a cohesive soft power strategy.

The exposition reinforced India's role as the custodian of Buddhist heritage, while highlighting Ladakh's significance as a living centre of Himalayan Buddhism in the country, a report has highlighted.

According to a report in a leading foreign policy think tank, the Centre for Global India Insights (CGII), the sacred relics served as a bridge be-

tween India's ancient history and contemporary diplomacy, showcasing values of peace, compassion, and coexistence to the world.

Held across Leh and Zaskar from May 1-14, 2026, it said, the "Sacred Exposition of the Holy Relics of Tathagata Buddha" blended faith, culture, heritage and diplomacy into a unified civilisational initiative.

"Organised through the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Culture, UT Ladakh Administration, the International Buddhist Confederation, the National Museum of India, the Archaeological Survey of India, the Ladakh Buddhist Association, the Ladakh Gumpa Association and other institutions, the exposition reflected



India's growing use of Buddhist heritage as an instrument of cultural diplomacy and global outreach," the CGII report detailed.

"The event coincided with the observance of the 2569th Vesak Buddha Purnima and

witnessed an unprecedented public display of the sacred Piprahwa relics associated with Lord Buddha. These relics, preserved at the National Museum in New Delhi, were brought to Ladakh, allowing devotees, monks, scholars, tourists and

international observers an opportunity for veneration and reflection," it added.

The report noted that the holy relic exposition reflected the convergence of spirituality and statecraft, with India projecting itself as the custodian of the Buddha's heritage and reinforcing civilisational identity on the global stage. The initiative underscored Buddhism's enduring role as a key pillar of India's soft power diplomacy, particularly in Asia and the Himalayan region.

Buddha Purnima marks the birth, enlightenment, and Mahaparinirvana of Gautama Buddha and is regarded as the holiest day for Buddhists globally. In 2026, the celebration carried special significance

in India as Ladakh became the centre of the observance. Known as a "living land of Dhamma", the region possesses deep historical and spiritual connections with Buddhism through its monasteries, traditions and trans-Himalayan cultural exchanges.

"The Ladakh exposition added a unique Himalayan dimension to this diplomacy. It highlighted India's cultural links with Tibetan Buddhism and underscored the importance of preserving Buddhist traditions in the Himalayan belt. At a time of geopolitical competition in Asia, such initiatives help India project moral and cultural leadership rooted in peace, compassion, and dialogue," the report noted.

Fuel dispensing continues without restrictions across state: UP gov't
LUCKNOW: (MAY 19)

Public sector oil marketing companies Indianoil, BPCL, and HPCL continue to maintain uninterrupted supplies of petrol, diesel and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) across UP, according to an official statement issued here on Tuesday.

The oil industry remains fully committed to ensure seamless availability of fuels through its extensive supply network comprising terminals, depots, LPG bottling plants and retail outlets, it said. Fuel dispensing operations are continuing smoothly across all outlets and supplies are being maintained without any restrictions, in line with prescribed safety and operational norms, it said.

Sensex, Nifty end lower as banking drag offsets IT rally; rupee hits record low

Benchmark stock market indices ended marginally lower on Tuesday as gains in information technology stocks were offset by weakness in banking shares, while investors remained cautious over uncertainty surrounding a possible US-Iran deal and continued pressure on the rupee.

The S&P BSE Sensex slipped 114.19 points, or 0.15%, to close at 75,200.85, while the NSE Nifty50 fell 31.95 points, or 0.14%, to settle at 23,618.

Investor sentiment remained cautious despite US President Donald Trump saying he had paused a planned attack on Iran after Tehran sent a peace proposal. Markets are now awaiting further clarity on whether diplomatic negotiations between the two



countries will move forward.

Broader markets outperformed the benchmarks, with the Nifty Midcap 100 rising 0.91% and the Nifty Smallcap 100 gaining 1.17%. India VIX, the volatility index, declined 4.86%. Among sectoral indices, Nifty IT emerged as the top gainer, climbing 3.23%, taking its three-session rally to over 7%. Analysts attributed the rise to bargain buying after the recent correction and support from a

stronger dollar, which benefits Indian IT exporters that earn a large share of revenue from the US market. Nifty Realty rose 1.43%, while Nifty Media gained 1.18%. Nifty PSU Bank climbed 0.81%, and Nifty Pharma, Nifty Healthcare Index and Nifty Consumer Durables also ended higher. However, Nifty Private Bank declined 0.74%, while Nifty Financial Services slipped 0.14%. On the Sensex pack, Infosys

surged 4.52%, HCL Technologies gained 2.73%, Tech Mahindra climbed 2.42%, and Tata Consultancy Services advanced 2.06%. Eternal Ltd also rose 2.03%. On the losing side, Kotak Mahindra Bank fell 2.51%, Titan Company declined 1.88%, Cement slipped 1.69%, Bharti Airtel dropped 1.40%, and Sun Pharmaceutical Industries fell 1.24%. HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank also ended lower, weighing on the banking index. Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said, "Domestic equity indices pared early gains to close in the red, despite an initial upswing fueled by optimism surrounding a temporary halt in U.S. military operations against Iran." "IT stocks stood as a notable exception, registering robust advances on the back of anticipated tailwinds from an accelerating rupee depreci-

ation and compelling valuations. Meanwhile, mid and small-caps quietly outshone their large-cap peers, drawing renewed buying interest after a meaningful correction," he added. Nair further said, "While fourth-quarter earnings continue to underscore the resilience of domestic economic momentum, market focus is increasingly pivoting toward mounting inflationary pressures. Concerns over potential earnings downgrades for Q1FY27 are gaining traction, driven by higher-than-anticipated WPI readings, the gradual pass-through of elevated fuel prices, and persistently firm bond yields." Meanwhile, the rupee weakened to a record low for the sixth straight session against the US dollar amid continued concerns over the prolonged US-Iran conflict and external pressures on the Indian economy.

ICICI Bank hikes debit card DCC fee from 1% to 3.5%: What it means

Dynamic Currency Conversion, commonly called DCC, allows customers to pay in their home currency instead of the local currency while making international transactions.



If you often use your debit card for international spending or online purchases linked to foreign merchants, your transactions could soon become more expensive. ICICI Bank has informed customers that it will revise the Dynamic Currency Conversion (DCC) fee on debit cards from June 21, 2026. The charge will rise sharply from the current 1% of the transaction amount to 3.5%.

WHAT IS CHANGING? The revised DCC fee will apply to certain debit card transactions carried out in Indian rupees under specific situations. This includes purchases made in Indian currency at international locations or payments made in India where the merchant is registered in a foreign country. In simple terms, even if you are paying in rupees, the extra charge may apply if the transaction is processed

through a foreign merchant network. The bank informed customers about the revision through an official communication, stating that the updated fee structure will come into effect from June 21.

WHAT IS DYNAMIC CURRENCY CONVERSION? Dynamic Currency Conversion, commonly called DCC, allows customers to pay in their home currency instead of the local currency while making international transactions. For example, if you are shopping abroad or paying a foreign website, you may sometimes see an option to pay directly in Indian rupees instead of dollars or another foreign currency. With the higher fee, customers may want to check transaction details more carefully, especially when choosing payment currency during overseas or cross-border purchases.

Early Diagnosis and Lifestyle Awareness Crucial in Tackling Rising Inflammatory Bowel Disease Cases

HYDERABAD, MAY 19

On the occasion of World Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) Day observed on May 19, gastroenterology experts from Medicovert Hospitals Hitec city stressed the urgent need for early diagnosis, public awareness, and timely access to specialized care for patients suffering from inflammatory bowel diseases. This year's global theme, "IBD Has No Borders - Access to IBD Care," highlights the importance of ensuring quality treatment reaches every patient irrespective of geography or economic barriers.



est-growing IBD burdens in Asia, with studies suggesting that nearly 1.4 to 1.6 million Indians may currently be living with some form of inflammatory bowel disease. Ulcerative Colitis is comparatively more common in India than Crohn's Disease, and men are marginally more affected than women, although the disease impacts both genders almost equally. Doctors also observed a concerning rise in cases among adolescents, college students, and young working professionals.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Arun Arora, Consultant Gastroenterologist, Hepatologist and Interventional Endoscopist, Medicovert Hospitals, Hitec City, said that inflammatory bowel diseases, primarily Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn's Disease, are increasingly being reported across India, particularly among urban populations and younger age groups between 20 and 40 years. While earlier considered uncommon in India, recent clinical observations indicate a steady rise in cases due to changing food habits, sedentary lifestyles, increasing stress levels, environmental pollution, excessive antibiotic usage, and altered gut microbiome patterns.

Experts noted that India is witnessing one of the fast-

plained weight loss, fatigue, anemia, and frequent bowel urgency should never be neglected, the doctor cautioned.

The doctor further stated that if left untreated, IBD can significantly impact quality of life and may lead to complications such as intestinal bleeding, bowel obstruction, malnutrition, fistulas, severe dehydration, and increased risk of colorectal cancer. However, with advances in gastroenterology care, including biologic therapies, targeted immunotherapy, precision diagnostics, minimally invasive procedures, and personalized nutrition support, most patients today can successfully manage the disease and lead active, productive lives.

The specialists emphasized that lifestyle management plays a major role in controlling flare-ups. Maintaining proper hygiene, following a balanced diet, reducing processed food intake, avoiding smoking and alcohol, managing stress, ensuring adequate sleep, and attending regular medical follow-ups can significantly help patients minimize complications and improve long-term outcomes.

Medicovert Hospitals experts appealed to the public not to ignore recurring digestive symptoms and encouraged people to seek timely consultation with gastroenterologists for early intervention and effective disease management.

Milk, Fuel and Gold Prices Rise, Forcing Families to Rethink Everyday Spending

The grocery bill feels heavier. Filling the petrol tank costs more. Even an occasional gold purchase suddenly seems expensive. Across India, rising prices are pinching household budgets, leaving many families asking: What everyday expenses can we cut without making life harder? Let's have a look.



Inflation does not always arrive with a dramatic warning. Sometimes, it quietly slips into everyday life - a pricier litre of milk, a fuel refill that suddenly costs more, a grocery basket that feels heavier on the wallet, or gold jewellery that now seems a little farther out of reach. That is exactly what many Indians are experiencing right now. Over the last few days, several essentials have become more expensive. Milk prices have risen, petrol and diesel prices have gone up again, CNG has become costlier in several places, and increased import duty on gold and silver has pushed up prices further. The pinch is showing up everywhere, i.e., from the kitchen to the commute. The bigger worry? Salaries have not grown at the same pace.

A time when families are already managing school fees, EMIs, electricity bills and household expenses, even small price increases are beginning to feel uncomfortable. Add to this Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent call for austerity and mindful spending, and many households are quietly asking themselves an important question: What can we cut back on without making life feel diffi-

cult? According to Aswini Bajaj, CEO of Leveraged Growth, a niche finance-based consultancy firm, austerity does not necessarily mean giving up comfort. "Austerity at home does not always mean sacrifice. Sometimes, it simply means becoming more intentional," he says. In other words, the idea is not to stop enjoying life, but to spend more thoughtfully. Here are some everyday expenses families may want to reconsider during financially uncertain times.

ORDERING FOOD: IS CONVENIENCE QUIETLY EMPLOYING YOUR WALLET?

After a long day at work, ordering dinner can feel like a small reward. But when takeaways become routine, they can quietly eat into monthly savings.

Food delivery apps often come with hidden extras, i.e., delivery fees, platform charges, packaging costs and restaurant mark-ups. A meal that appears affordable can end up costing far more than expected. "Home food is healthier, calmer, and usually far more economical," Bajaj points out. For families trying to cut costs, even reducing food deliveries from several times a week to once or twice can free up meaningful savings over time.

QUICK COMMERCE: ARE SMALL ORDERS BECOMING BIG EXPENSES?

Forgot onions? Need bread? Running low on shampoo? Ten-minute delivery apps have made shopping incredibly convenient. But convenience, experts say, often comes at a hidden cost. Many households now place several small orders throughout the week instead of planning larger grocery purchases. Individually, the spending may feel insignificant. Together, however, it can quietly inflate the monthly budget. Bajaj refers to the concept of Economic Order Quantity (EOQ), arguing that planned buying often works out cheaper.

Put simply: one organised grocery run may cost far less than five "urgent" doorstep deliveries.

NEW CLOTHES FOR EVERY OCCASION? MAYBE NOT

Social media has normalised a culture where every outing, celebration or office event appears to demand a fresh outfit. But constantly buying clothes can become an expensive habit. Repeating outfits, investing in durable fabrics and focusing on quality rather than quantity may help families spend less without sacrificing style.

Govt likely to receive a big dividend from RBI in FY 27

The Reserve Bank of India is expected to approve a record surplus transfer to the government this week. The payout could give the exchequer extra room as higher energy prices add fresh uncertainty.



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may soon hand over a record amount of money to the central government, giving it a financial cushion at a time when global uncertainty is rising and energy prices are under pressure, according to a report by Bloomberg. Economists surveyed expect the RBI to transfer a surplus of nearly Rs 3 lakh crore to the Centre this week, which could be higher than last year's record payout of Rs 2.7 lakh crore. The money, often called the RBI dividend, comes from the central bank's earnings during the financial year. The RBI board is expected to meet on Friday, May 22, to approve the transfer, according to people familiar with the matter. While the exact figure is yet to be announced, some estimates suggest the amount could even rise to Rs 3.4 lakh crore.

WHY IS THE RBI EXPECTED TO PAY A BIGGER DIVIDEND?

The RBI earns income from several activities. It makes money through investments in foreign exchange reserves, bond holdings, liquidity operations and fees linked to currency management. Experts believe the central bank had a strong year financially in FY26. Gains from foreign exchange trading, higher global interest rates and rising gold prices are believed to have boosted the RBI's earnings significantly. As a result, economists expect the surplus available for transfer to the government to be larger than usual. In simple terms, when the RBI earns more than it needs for expenses and reserves, the extra amount is transferred to the government.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER FOR THE GOVERNMENT?

A bigger dividend from the RBI means the government gets additional funds without needing to raise taxes or borrow more.

The timing could be important. Global concerns, especially around the Iran conflict, have pushed up worries over oil and energy prices. Since India imports a large part of its energy needs, higher prices can put pressure on inflation and government finances. An extra Rs 3 lakh crore could help the government manage spending, support welfare schemes or reduce pressure on its budget deficit. Simply put, it acts as a financial cushion during uncertain times.

WHAT IS THE CONTINGENCY BUFFER, AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Before transferring surplus money, the RBI keeps aside a portion as a contingency buffer, i.e., a reserve meant to deal with financial shocks or unexpected risks. Last year, the central bank kept this buffer at 7.5% of its total assets, which is the highest level allowed within the official range of 4.5% to 7.5%. Economists believe the RBI is likely to maintain the buffer at the higher end of this year too, because of ongoing global uncertainty. Even then, experts say there is enough room for a record dividend payout. If estimates hold true, the Centre could soon receive one of the biggest-ever transfers from the RBI, a timely boost at a moment when global risks are growing and economic pressures remain high.

Rupee hits record low yet again, nears Rs 97 against US dollar

The rupee slipped to a fresh record low of 96.44 against the US dollar on Tuesday, nearing the Rs 97 mark. Rising crude prices, weak capital inflows and higher US yields are adding to pressure on India's external finances despite RBI intervention.

The rupee slipped to yet another record low on Tuesday, coming close to the Rs 97 mark against the US dollar, as rising crude oil prices, growing pressure on India's external finances and higher US bond yields continued to weaken the currency. The rupee fell to 96.44 against the dollar, crossing its previous lifetime low of 96.3875 touched on Monday. The currency has now weakened nearly 6% since the Iran war began in late February, making it one of Asia's worst-performing currencies this year.

WHY THE RUPEE IS

FALLING AGAIN

The latest fall in the rupee is mainly being driven by three major pressures:

- rising crude oil prices,
- weak foreign capital inflows,
- and higher US Treasury yields.

India imports nearly 85% of its crude oil requirements. As oil prices rise globally, India has to spend more dollars on imports, increasing pressure on the rupee. The ongoing conflict involving Iran and tensions in West Asia have pushed oil prices sharply higher in recent months. The prolonged stand-off between the US and Iran has also raised fears of disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important oil shipping routes. Higher oil prices are increasing India's import bill and widening the country's current account deficit. Economists now expect India's current account deficit to widen sharply during the current financial year.



INDIA'S EXTERNAL PRESSURE IS RISING

Experts say India's external sector is facing growing pressure because high oil prices are coming at a time when foreign investment flows remain weak. According to economist estimates, India's balance of payments deficit could widen to between USD 65 billion and USD 70 billion this year. If that happens, it would mark the third straight year of deficits for India's external accounts. Global financial firm HSBC said India is facing a "two-fold challenge" of reducing its current account

deficit while also attracting stable foreign capital inflows.

Weak portfolio investments and concerns over India's economic growth outlook are making the situation more difficult. Economists also warn that remittances from the Middle East could come under pressure if the conflict in the region continues for a prolonged period.

HIGH OIL PRICES HURTING INDIA

The impact of rising energy prices is already becoming visible in economic data. India's merchandise trade deficit widened to USD 28.38 billion in April, mainly be-

cause crude oil imports rose to a six-month high.

At the same time, wholesale inflation in April climbed to its highest level in three-and-a-half years, showing that higher fuel and energy prices are slowly pushing up costs across the economy. The government has already increased petrol and diesel prices twice recently as state-run oil marketing companies struggled to absorb rising global crude oil costs. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also urged people to conserve fuel and reduce unnecessary foreign exchange spending, highlighting concerns around the pressure building on the economy.

US BOND YIELDS ADDING MORE PRESSURE

Another major reason behind the rupee's fall is the sharp rise in US Treasury yields. The US 10-year Treasury yield recently climbed to its highest level in a year as investors increasingly started pricing in the possibility

of another interest rate hike by the US Federal Reserve. Higher US bond yields usually attract global investors towards dollar assets because they offer better returns. This makes it harder for countries like India to attract foreign investment flows needed to finance trade and current account deficits. The stronger dollar is also increasing pressure on emerging market currencies globally, including the rupee. **RBI INTERVENTION LIMITING LOSSES**

Traders believe the Reserve Bank of India has been intervening in the currency market by selling dollars to slow the pace of the rupee's fall. Apart from direct intervention, policymakers have also taken regulatory steps in recent weeks to manage pressure on foreign exchange reserves and imports. However, analysts say the rupee may continue to remain under pressure if crude oil prices stay elevated and foreign investment flows remain weak.



Wayanad Climate Shift Reshapes Farming Futures

In the high ranges of Wayanad, where mist once arrived with dependable rhythm and the monsoon rarely missed its cue, farming has entered an uneasy new phase. Rains now come late or all at once. Dry spells last longer. Crops that once

followed predictable cycles behave differently. It is in this shifting landscape that a modest but significant intervention emerged in Mananthavady this week with the release of the eighth edition of Wayanad's Climate Resilient Agriculture Cal-

endar for 2026-27. The event was inaugurated by Mananthavady Block Panchayat President Meenakshi Raman, while the calendar was formally released by Thirunelly Grama Panchayat President Anju Balan. Their presence carried significance

beyond ceremony. Both are women from tribal communities now occupying positions of local authority in a region where indigenous knowledge has long shaped agriculture but rarely found recognition within formal governance.

What began in 2019 as a farmer-led initiative of the Thirunelly Agri Producer Company Ltd (TAPCo) has evolved into a collective exercise involving scientists, civil society groups, and grassroots knowledge practitioners. The Hume Centre for Ecology and Wildlife Biology contributes climate analysis and ecological insights. The Keystone Foundation brings experience from years of engagement with tribal communities. Nattarivu Padana Kendram works to document and validate traditional knowledge systems in agriculture, food, and health. The result is not merely a technical manual, but a living document shaped by science, memory, observation, and generations of farming experience. Structured from April to March, the calendar maps farming practices for Wayanad's major crops including paddy, tubers, vegetables, coffee, and pepper. But it goes beyond listing cultivation activities. It aligns farm operations with lunar cycles while also providing alerts on possible extreme weather events each month. A farmer reading the calendar in June or October is not just looking at sowing schedules but also the likelihood of intense rainfall, dry spells,

In many ways, the calendar functions as a grassroots action research tool. The release event was followed by a session led by Renjini, who heads the climate programme at the Hume Centre. For many associated with the initiative, the calendar represents not just an agricultural tool but also a way of reclaiming dignity and continuity in farming. Saritha O T, who returned to Mananthavady after working as a lecturer in Hyderabad to take up vegetable cultivation, said farming transformed her understanding of climate and food. "When I was teaching in Hyderabad, farming was something I thought about emotionally, as a memory from home. But when I returned and began cultivating vegetables myself, I realised how deeply uncertainty shapes every decision a farmer makes," she said. "The rains no longer follow familiar patterns. Sometimes crops fail because of excess rain, sometimes because there is no rain at all. In such a situation, a calendar like this becomes more than a guide. It becomes a collective memory of how

farmers are learning to adapt together." Saritha said one of the strengths of the initiative was that it did not treat farmers merely as beneficiaries of expert advice. "The calendar respects local knowledge. It asks farmers to document what they observe, what succeeds and what fails. That process itself creates confidence among people who often feel abandoned by larger systems," she added. O V Johnson, chairman of TAPCo and a conservator of traditional paddy seeds, said farming communities now face multiple layers of crisis simultaneously. "The problem is not only climate change. Farmers are also struggling with collapsing prices, rising costs, labour shortages and loss of indigenous seeds that were once adapted to local conditions," he said. Johnson believes local seed diversity itself is an important form of climate resilience. "Many traditional varieties can tolerate irregular rain or withstand local ecological stresses better than commercial hybrids. Conserving them is not nostalgia. It is part of

preparing for an uncertain future," he said. According to Johnson, the calendar emerged from repeated discussions among farmers who felt increasingly disoriented by changing seasons. "Earlier, farmers could roughly predict rainfall and cultivation cycles from experience. Today that confidence has weakened. The calendar was an attempt to rebuild a system of shared learning by combining scientific inputs with local observations," he said. One of TAPCo's key interventions has been reducing uncertainty around markets and weather. The organisation consults farmers before sowing and announces procurement prices in advance so that cultivators have some assurance about returns. It procures produce directly from farm gates and makes payments immediately, reducing dependence on middlemen and easing the financial stress faced by small farmers. Rajesh Krishnan, who conceptualised and coordinated the TAPCo initiative, said the effort emerged from conversations with farmers who repeatedly described ag-

riculture as a gamble shaped by forces beyond their control. "Across the world, farmers face two major uncertainties. One is the uncertainty of weather and the other is the uncertainty of markets. We wanted to see how a local institution could reduce at least some part of that insecurity," he said. Rajesh explained that the climate calendar became a natural extension of this philosophy. "If markets are uncertain and climate is unstable, then knowledge itself becomes a form of security for farmers. The calendar tries to create that by helping farmers prepare rather than simply react," he added. By offering month-wise anticipatory guidance, the calendar allows farmers to adjust practices in advance. Sowing can be delayed or advanced based on expected rainfall. Crop choices can be diversified to spread risk. Preparations for extreme weather can be made ahead of time. While it cannot eliminate uncertainty, it helps farmers respond to it with greater awareness. The involvement of local governance adds another layer to this evolving frame-

work. Thirunelly Panchayat has allocated funds this year to establish a community-level weather monitoring network. Local teams will collect and interpret weather data that can inform a panchayat-level forecasting mechanism. Mananthavady Block Panchayat is expected to expand the model across its six panchayats in the coming year. If realised, this could create a network of hyper-local climate intelligence that strengthens farm-level decision making. The leadership of Meenakshi Raman and Anju Balan is significant in itself. In many parts of India, climate adaptation remains a top-down process disconnected from local realities. In Wayanad, women from tribal communities are beginning to shape that process from within. The calendar is available in Malayalam and English, making the model accessible to researchers, policymakers, and practitioners elsewhere. Rajesh Krishnan of the Thirunelly Agri Producer Company Ltd said the calendar-making process has been receiving strong support and guidance from Asar Social Impact Advisors, a think tank working on climate resilience and adaptation. "The calendar-making exercise, part of the larger Climate Resilient Agriculture initiative, has been supported since 2002 by Asar Climate Impact Advisors, a think tank working on climate resilience and adaptation. The collaboration has helped the regional model gain recognition at both the state and national levels," says Rajesh.

Renjini's presentation connected global climate phenomena with local realities. Concepts such as El Niño and La Niña were explained through their direct impact on Wayanad's fields and seasons. The current year, expected to be influenced by El Niño, is likely to bring altered rainfall patterns and increased temperature stress. For farmers already grappling with

irregular monsoons, this could mean delayed sowing, reduced yields, and higher vulnerability for crops such as coffee and pepper. The discussion also highlighted a larger transformation underway. Climate change is no longer a series of isolated events. It is reshaping the structure of seasons themselves. Rainfall is becoming more intense but less evenly distributed. Dry

periods are extending. Pest cycles are shifting with temperature changes. Traditional indicators farmers once relied on are becoming less reliable because the environment they were attuned to is itself changing. For Wayanad's farmers, the impact is already visible. Paddy cultivation has steadily declined due to labour shortages, wildlife incursions, erratic rainfall,

and poor returns. Coffee and pepper plantations, the backbone of the district's cash economy, are increasingly vulnerable to temperature fluctuations and disease outbreaks. Tubers and vegetables face challenges from climate variability and soil degradation. This wider crisis shaped the emergence of TAPCo as a farmer-led intervention.

Wheat Procurement Slows After Harvest

The procurement of wheat, the primary staple in much of north India, has slowed despite 98 per cent of this season's crop being harvested, according to latest government figures. Wheat was planted over 33.417 million hectares (mha) in the Rabi season 2025-26. According to data from the crop division of the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, 98 per cent of the wheat crop has been harvested as of May 8, 2026. In Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, 98 per cent of the crop has been harvested. In the remaining wheat-growing states, 100 per cent crop has been harvested. Despite this, wheat is not being procured in the mandis (wholesale markets). According to Food Corporation of India data, the wheat procurement estimate for the Rabi Marketing Season 2026-27 has been kept at 3,44,97,000 tonnes. So far, 2,17,09,470 tonnes of wheat have been procured. In other words, only about 63 per cent of the estimated procurement has been achieved so far. Wheat procurement in Punjab was estimated at 1.22 crore or 12.2 million tonnes, against which 1,05,14,709 tonnes have been procured so far. That is, Punjab has achieved about 86 per cent of its estimated target. But Haryana is lagging behind this time. In Haryana, only 25.88 lakh or 2.588 million tonnes of wheat have been procured so far against the estimate of 72 lakh or 7.2 million tonnes, which is about 36 per cent of the target. In Uttar Pradesh, 12.08 lakh or 1.208 million tonnes of wheat have been procured so far against the estimate of 25 lakh or 2.5 million tonnes, which is about 48 per cent of the target. In Madhya Pradesh, 57.34 lakh or 5.734 million tonnes of wheat have been procured so far against the estimate of 10 million tonnes, which is about 57 per cent of the target. In Rajasthan, 16.25 lakh or 1.625 million tonnes of wheat have been procured so far against the estimate of 23.50 lakh or 2.350 million tonnes, which is about 69 per cent of the target. Farmer leader Dharmendra Malik told Down To Earth that due to the high buffer stock, the Centre does not want to

buy wheat. Consequently, the government had already reduced the procurement target. Second, production is also expected to be lower this year. However, the government had claimed that wheat production would be higher this year. This is the reason why the government had also opened the export of wheat. Due to lack of government procurement, wheat is also being purchased from farmers at a lower price. Though Malik claimed that wheat prices will pick up next month, by then most of the wheat will be procured from farmers and will have reached traders. Even as the government is not buying wheat, farmers are not getting the right price of the crop even in the mandis. The Minimum Support Price (MSP) of wheat is Rs 2,585 per quintal, while its average price in the mandis is Rs 2,479 per quintal. Not only wheat, but the wholesale prices of many major agricultural commodities are also running below the MSP. According to the weekly report of the Crop Weather Watch Group (CWWG) under the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, as on May 11, 2026, the market prices of several crops including paddy, wheat, maize, arhar, pulses and oilseeds have been recorded below the MSP. According to the data, the average market price of bajra or pearl millet was 25.55 per cent below the MSP. The MSP of bajra is fixed at Rs 2,775 per quintal, while its average price in the mandis was recorded at Rs 2,066 per quintal. Similarly, the MSP of sunflower is Rs 7,721 per quintal, but it is sold at an average of Rs 5,870 per quintal in the market, which is 23.97 per cent less than the MSP. Similarly, the MSP of maize is Rs 2,400 per quintal, while the mandi price is recorded at Rs 1,889 per quintal, i.e. 21.29 per cent less. Among pulses, moong was below the MSP by 13.82 per cent. The MSP of moong is Rs 8,768 per quintal, while the market price is recorded at Rs 7,556 per quintal. Urad is down 10.69 per cent and gram is down 9.65 per cent. Paddy (unmilled rice) was also recorded 4.81 per cent below the MSP.



Onions dumped, potato crops destroyed



Why falling farm prices are not lowering retail food bills

Farmers in several states are dumping onions, destroying potato crops and discarding tomatoes after mandi prices fell sharply despite rising food inflation. Food inflation rose from 3.87% in March 2026 to 4.20% in April 2026, while consumers continued to pay elevated retail prices for onions, potatoes and tomatoes. Government data shows the all-India average retail price of onion rose to ₹25.36 per kg on 12 May 2026, even as farmers in mandis were forced to sell onions for ₹5 to ₹7 per kg. In Maharashtra, farmers received only about 43% of the retail onion price, highlighting the widening gap between what growers earn and what consumers pay. Experts say the Price Stabilisation Fund could help stabilise prices, but onion procurement remains limited to only 1% to 2% of total production. Reports from different parts of the country are once again making headlines. A farmer in Maharashtra reportedly received only Rs 1 for 25 bags of onions. Farmers in Nashik dumped onions on the road. In Uttar Pradesh, farmers unable to secure a fair price for their potatoes ran tractors over standing crops. In Karnataka, frustrated farmers emptied a truck loaded with tomatoes into an enclosure for sheep and goats. At the same time, reports show that almost all crops are being sold below the minimum support price. These incidents have emerged even as the food price index recorded a rise in April. Food

inflation stood at 3.87 per cent in March 2026 and rose to 4.20 per cent in April 2026. Even in retail markets, consumers continue to buy potatoes and onions at elevated prices. The same old reasons are being cited for farmers receiving low prices: bumper production, bad weather and a lack of cold storage facilities. These factors mean farmers are unable to get full prices for their produce. But prices for consumers are not falling.

Retail prices stay high

A report from the Price Monitoring Cell of the Department of Consumer Affairs, under the Union Ministry of Food and Consumer Affairs, shows that the all-India average retail price of onion on May 12, 2026 was Rs 25.36 per kg, up from Rs 23.63 a month earlier. On the same day last year, the retail price was Rs 27.07 per kg. Similarly, the retail price of potato on 12 May 2026 was Rs 20.86 per kg, compared with Rs 19.06 per kg a month earlier. The price of tomato was Rs 34.85 per kg on 12 May, compared with Rs 25.28 per kg a month earlier. In mandis, however, farmers are being forced to sell onions at Rs 5 to Rs 7 per kg. For example, in Maharashtra's Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar district, data from Agmarknet, under the Union Agriculture Ministry, shows a continuous decline in wholesale onion prices in the district's major agricultural produce markets in the second week of

May 2026. The average wholesale price in the five major mandis of the district — Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar APMC, Gangapur, Lasur Station, Paithan and Vajapur — was Rs 578.08 per quintal. This was much lower than Rs 688.37 per quintal the previous week and Rs 835.22 per quintal during the same period last year. The wholesale price at Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar APMC was Rs 496.65 per quintal. Gangapur APMC saw the largest year-on-year decline, at 47.7 per cent, while prices at Paithan mandi fell by 25 per cent in a month. Paithan is the area where farmers reportedly received Rs 1 for 25 bags of onions.

Farmer's shrinking share

This raises the question: how much are farmers receiving compared with the price charged to consumers? Taking Maharashtra as a whole, the average wholesale price of onions in the second week of May was Rs 933.30 per quintal. Data from the Department of Consumer Affairs shows that the average retail price of onions on 12 May 2026 was Rs 21.63 per kg. This means farmers received only 43 per cent of the retail price. In such a situation, there have long been demands for government intervention. Farmers have been demanding a minimum support price. Experts believe the Price Stabilisation Fund, or PSF, could provide relief to both farmers and consumers. The central

government launched the PSF in 2014-15. Its aim is to provide relief to farmers by purchasing onions during peak production and later making onions available to consumers at controlled prices during periods of shortage. According to the report Documenting Onion Operations under PSF, prepared by the Consumer Affairs Ministry, only 9,000 metric tonnes of onion was procured under the PSF in 2015-16. This increased to 638,000 metric tonnes by 2023-24. The result was that farmers' share of every rupee paid by consumers increased from 45 per cent to 54 per cent. Farmers received prices 3 per cent to 19 per cent higher than market rates, and payment times decreased from seven to 10 days to three days. At the consumer level, retail onion price volatility in Delhi decreased by 24 per cent.

Calls for reform

But procurement under the PSF remains extremely small. According to the study report, in 2023-24, only 6.38 lakh metric tonnes of onion were procured under the PSF, while the country's total onion production was more than 300 lakh metric tonnes. This means government procurement was limited to only 1 per cent to 2 per cent of total production. The report recommends that the PSF be developed not just as a crisis management plan, but as a permanent market stabilisation mechanism.



BADMINTON

'Never back down, PV': Sindhu shares Virat Kohli's message



NEW DELHI: Indian badminton star PV Sindhu shared an emotional tribute to Virat Kohli after the two sporting greats met at the recent RCB Innovation Lab Indian Sports Summit in Bengaluru on Tuesday. Later, the two-time Olympic medalist posted a photograph with the former India captain on Instagram along with a heartfelt message that quickly resonated across social media. "Every time I've needed guidance, you've always been there with the right advice and the right words. There is no better example of what a true senior in Indian sport should be: generous, grounded, inspiring, and always willing to lift others.

TENNIS

There is so much to learn from BCCI and IPL...; Leander Paes



MUMBAI: Indian tennis legend Leander Paes has asked the various National Sports Federations (NSF) around the country to learn from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the Indian Premier League (IPL) how to professionalise sports not only at the top of the pyramid but also at the grassroots level. "When you look at that, there is so much to learn from the BCCI and the IPL.

Sooryavanshi, Jurel power RR to clinical 7-wicket win over LSG



JAIPUR

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi continued his evening ritual of leaving spectators spellbound with a breathtaking 38-ball 93 as Rajasthan Royals moved closer to a playoff berth with a one-sided seven-wicket win over Lucknow Super Giants in an IPL match here on Tuesday.

The 15-year-old, who is all set to board the flight to Dublin with the Indian senior team next month, was once again unstoppable, clobbering 10 sixes in an extraordinary display of bat speed and razor-sharp hand-eye coordination. By the time, he missed out on his third IPL century by a mere seven runs, he had ensured Royals will make a meal of what could have been a tricky 221 run chase after Mitchell Marsh's 57-ball-96 had taken LSG to 220 for 5.

And certainly, the icing on the cake was Ian Bishop's line on air, one that could well be remembered for posterity: "He is ready." Royals are now on 14 points and would need a win against Mumbai Indians in their last game to make it to play-off.

If Marsh was muscularity pro-max, Sooryavanshi was all about amazing skill-set where a leg-spinner's slider delivered at an angle could be dispatched into extra cover stands with disdain.

While Marsh hit poor balls for sixes, Sooryavanshi sent the good ones sailing into the stands. And when it came to poor deliveries, he tortured them.

He is well on his way (53) to break Chris Gayle's (59) record of maximum sixes in a season. He is now 26 runs short of completing 600 runs in the season. Dhruv Jurel completed the chase with an unbeaten 38-ball 53 but the night unquestionably belonged to the teenage sensation.

Mayank Yadav, the man who burst into the 2024 IPL as India's fastest ever bowler, was dispatched for 29 runs in a single over. The short balls were pulled, the fuller ones were driven and anything with width was flayed. The drooping shoulder of Prince Yadav, who got his maiden India call-up on the day, said it all. LSG skipper Rishabh Pant, already reeling under pressure to revive his white-ball international career, looked increasingly helpless as the carnage unfolded around him. Earlier, Marsh trumped Royals attack with a 57-ball-96 but Jofra Archer's five-run final over did boost the home team's confidence.

After Jos Inglis' 29-ball-60 provided the initial impetus, Marsh, nicknamed as 'Bison' in the cricketing universe, displayed ox-like muscularity smashing 11 fours and five sixes, once again emerging as his team's batting hero for the umpteenth time during the current season. This was his third score of 90 or more in one season.

In a season full of disappointments for LSG, Marsh's performance (563 runs in 13 games) has been the only

saving grace for Sanjeev Goenka's men.

Royals, who need to win the last two games to qualify for the play-offs, were below par with the ball with questions being raised about stand-in skipper Yashasvi Jaiswal's decision to bowl first on a good batting deck. The platform was, however, set by Inglis during the Powerplay overs as he hit seven fours and three sixes in an opening stand of 109 in just over eight overs.

In the past few games, Royals bowling attack hasn't been able to make inroads in the Powerplay overs, something that has affected its performance.

While Inglis attacked Jofra Archer to put spanner in Royals' strategy, Marsh did keep up the pace with his powerful hits — especially the pull-shots that sailed into the stands. Once Inglis was dismissed, Marsh took charge as one of his best shots was a six over extra cover — a perfect union of power and timing. Nicholas Pooran (16 off 11) didn't score many and Rishabh Pant (35 off 23 balls) despite a 64-run third wicket stand never looked convincing. He wasted a lot of deliveries and it seemed that recent developments in his international career (removed from Test vice captaincy and dropped from ODIs) is bothering him. The likes of Sushant Mishra (0/46 in 4 overs), Brijesh Sharma (0/44 in 4 overs), Sandeep Sharma (0/43 in 3 overs) erred in lengths against Marsh even as young leg-spinner Yash Raj Punja (2/35) did trouble the batters.

Frustrated Rishabh Pant allegedly uses 'F-word' on national TV after 7-wicket defeat to RR

JAIPUR

Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) captain Rishabh Pant delivered a blunt and straightforward assessment after his side's seven-wicket defeat to Rajasthan Royals at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium on Tuesday, insisting that his side remains 'a f***ing good team' despite slipping to another high-scoring loss in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026.

LSG, though eliminated from the play-offs race, posted a formidable 220/5 in 20 overs on a batting-friendly surface, but Rajasthan Royals overhauled the total in just 19.1 overs, as Donovan Ferreira's late strike sealed the chase at 225/3.

Despite the defeat, Pant remained firm in his belief in the squad's quality and character, stressing that results do not define their internal confidence.

"We are proud as a team regardless of what our situation is right now. The kind of team we have, we know we can win this. Regardless of anything, we are confident enough as a team and as individuals. It hasn't gone our way, and ev-



eryone knows that, but that doesn't take away the fact that we are a f***ing good team," the LSG skipper said after the loss. While acknowledging the opposition's quality of execution, Pant felt his side missed out on a slightly higher total after a strong start.

"I think there are a few ways to look at it. In the middle overs and then in the last over, the way Archer bowled, I think it was really good. But we could have actually scored five or ten runs more on this kind of wicket when you get that kind of start, and we just couldn't capitalise in the last over," Pant said. On the broader challenge of defending totals on such

surfaces, Pant highlighted the limited margin for error and the importance of simplicity in execution under pressure.

"It's definitely a difficult one for sure because you always want to back your bowlers, but sometimes it's hard. On a wicket like this, there is less margin for the bowlers, and having too many suggestions doesn't work out. Sometimes you have to keep a simple plan, keep focusing on one ball at a time, and just try to execute the plan," he added. Pant also pointed to the value of experience in crunch situations, noting how difficult it is to replace seasoned performers in high-pressure phases of the game.

Manav Suthar joins India Test squad for Afghanistan series

JAIPUR

A wave of excitement and pride has swept across Rajasthan following the selection of Rajasthan all-rounder Manav Suthar in India's Test squad for the upcoming Test series against Afghanistan.

Welcoming the announcement made by the Board of Control for Cricket in India Senior Selection Committee, Mohit Jaswant Yadav, Convener of the Rajasthan Cricket Association Ad-hoc Committee, along with all members of the committee, congratulated Manav Suthar on his achievement and extended best wishes for a bright and successful international career.

Yadav stated that the selection has brought immense joy to the entire Rajasthan crick-



et fraternity and serves as a proud moment for the state.

Manav Suthar has become the first cricketer from Rajasthan to be selected for India's Test team in 12 years. The first match of the India-Afghanistan Test series is scheduled to be played in Mullanpur starting June 6, 2026.

Prior to his selection, Rajasthan had produced only a handful of Test cricketers, including Salim Durani, who

represented India from 1959-60 to 1972-73 and played 29 Tests, scoring 1,202 runs and claiming 75 wickets; Hanumant Singh, who played 14 Tests between 1963-64 and 1969-70, scoring 686 runs; Parthasarathy Sharma, who featured in five Tests from 1974-75 to 1976-77 and scored 187 runs; and Pankaj Singh, who played two Tests during 2014-15 and took two wickets.

Manav Suthar's domestic cricket record has been highly impressive across formats. In 29 first-class matches, he has scored 945 runs and taken 129 wickets. In List A cricket, he has played 25 matches, scoring 350 runs and taking 34 wickets, while in Twenty20 cricket, he has appeared in 29 matches, scoring 94 runs and claiming 25 wickets.

"Importance of Physical Literacy Must Increase", says Pallela Gopichand

HYDERABAD

Padma Bhushan awardee Pallela Gopichand delivered a special lecture on "Physical Literacy" during the "Youth and Sports Week-2026" program held at Gachibowli Indoor Stadium.

The events are being organized by the Telangana Sports Department from May 18 to 23 as part of the "Praja Palana Pragathi Pranaliika" 99-day action plan. The celebrations are being conducted with the primary objectives of youth empowerment and promoting fitness.

Speaking on the occasion, Gopichand said that awareness about the importance of physical literacy should not be limited only to athletes but should reach every section of society. He explained that physical literacy plays a crucial role in developing a healthy lifestyle, discipline,



mental strength, and sportsmanship among youth.

He opined that the sports sector is among the key fields that bring recognition and prestige to the country, and that a healthy society contributes to comprehensive development in all sectors.

On the occasion, Dr. A. Sonbala Devi stated that the government is giving special emphasis to the development of sports in-



frastructure and the promotion of sports at the grassroots level across the state.

She said that the objective of "Youth and Sports Week-2026" is to create awareness about physical health, expand social participation in sports, and identify talented sportspersons across the state.

Sports Authority Deputy Directors Sujatha and Raviteja, Gachibowli Stadium Administrator Kannam Madhu, coaches, and a large number of young athletes participated in the event.

Alcaraz pulls out of Wimbledon owing to lingering wrist injury

NEW DELHI

World No. 2 Carlos Alcaraz has pulled out of both Wimbledon and the Queen's Club Championships while he continues to recover from a persistent right wrist injury, marking a significant setback for the grass-court season and the year's third Grand Slam.

The Spaniard confirmed the decision in a message posted on X, saying he was still not physically ready to return to competition despite progress in rehabilitation.

"My recovery is going well, and I feel much better, but unfortunately, I'm still not ready to be able to play, and that's why I have to withdraw from the grass-court swing at Queen's and Wimbledon. They are two really special tournaments for me, and I'll miss them a lot. We keep



working to return as soon as possible," Alcaraz wrote.

The withdrawal continues a frustrating spell on the sidelines for the 23-year-old, who has not played competitively since his injury concerns intensified during the clay-court season earlier this year. Alcaraz had already pulled out of the Italian Open in Rome as well as the French Open, where he had been due to defend the title

he won in dramatic fashion last season.

The Spaniard lifted the French Open trophy in 2025 after defeating world No. 1 Jannik Sinner in an epic five-set final that lasted five hours and 29 minutes, widely regarded as one of the greatest Grand Slam finals in recent years.

However, concerns over his fitness had been building for weeks before this year's

French Open. Alcaraz withdrew from the Barcelona Open after receiving treatment on his right wrist and forearm during his opening-round match, before also skipping the Madrid Open.

At the 2026 Laureus Awards earlier this year, where he was named Sportsman of the Year, Alcaraz appeared wearing a brace on his right wrist, further fuelling doubts over his immediate playing future. He later confirmed that medical evaluations had forced him to step away from competition in order to avoid aggravating the injury. "After the results of the tests carried out today, we have decided that the most prudent thing to do is to be cautious and not participate in Rome or Roland-Garros as we wait to evaluate the progress so we can decide when to return to the court.

French Open: Andreescu, Pliskova win on Day 2 of qualifiers

PARIS

Former Grand Slam champions and experienced tour regulars negotiated a rain-hit day of qualifying at the French Open on Tuesday, with Bianca Andreescu and Karolina Pliskova among the notable names advancing into the next round in Paris.

Andreescu, continuing her comeback climb up the rankings, looked sharp during a straightforward 6-3, 6-2 victory over French teenager Daphnee Mpetshi Perricard. The former US Open champion, currently ranked No. 160 in the world, is attempting to secure a sixth career main-draw appearance at Roland Garros and will next face Slo-

vakia's Viktoria Hrunceakova. Pliskova, meanwhile, produced one of the more dramatic recoveries of the day. The former world No. 1 was completely outplayed in the opening set against South Korea's Ku Yeon-woo before regrouping to storm back for a 0-6, 6-3, 6-1 victory.

The Czech veteran has been rebuilding steadily after injury setbacks derailed much of her 2025 campaign. Having started this season ranked outside the top 1,000 after prolonged leg problems, Pliskova arrived in Paris with improved momentum following recent quarterfinal appearances in Linz and Madrid.

Seeded 20th in qualifying, the 33-year-old is now aiming

to reach the Roland Garros main draw for the 14th time in the past 15 seasons. She will next take on Spain's Marina Bassols Ribera.

American third seed Ashlyn Krueger also progressed comfortably after defeating French wild card Margaux Rouvroy 6-4, 6-3, while fellow American Robin Montgomery knocked out 31st seed Maddison Inglis in straight sets. Former Wimbledon quarterfinalist Lulu Sun recovered from a set down to beat China's Ma Ye-Xin 2-6, 6-3, 6-2 and stay alive in qualifying.

There was disappointment, however, for several teenage hopefuls. Eighteen-year-old Czech talent Laura Samson lost a marathon contest to

Argentina's Julia Riera, while reigning US Open junior champion Jeline Vandromme fell in straight sets to Japan's Aoi Ito in her Grand Slam qualifying debut.

Another teenager, Serbia's Teodora Kostovic, enjoyed a far smoother outing after brushing aside Elizabeth Mandlik 6-2, 6-2.

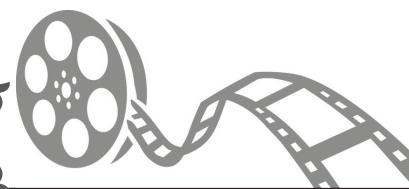
The women's qualifying draw had already seen several notable names advance on Monday. Former Roland Garros finalist Sloane Stephens, semifinalists Tamara Zidansek and Martina Trevisan, along with Irina-Camelia Begu and former junior champion Alina Korneeva, all moved into the next round.

Greek player Despina Pa-



pamichail also caused an upset by eliminating top seed Lanlana Tararudee, while France's Carole Monnet battled through a tense three-set encounter to keep home hopes alive in Paris.

On Monday, Sloane Stephens, Tamara Zidansek, and Martina Trevisan all advanced in the French Open qualifying with opening-round victories. Irina-Camelia Begu and former junior champion Alina Korneeva also progressed, while Despina Pamichail upset top seed Lanlana Tararudee. Elsewhere, Dominika Salkova defeated teenager Veronika Podrez, and French wild card Carole Monnet battled through to the second round.



Hurt By Flops, Sreeleela Shifting To Mumbai?

Just months ago, Tollywood treated her like the busiest heroine in the industry. Today, she's silently rebuilding her career somewhere else if the reports coming up are true. Sometimes in cinema, the industry that launches you fastest is also the first one to move on. The same happened with many heroines, and it looks like it's happening in the case of 'Kissik' starlet Sreeleela too. Recently, Sreeleela pinned her hopes on Ustaad Bhagat Singh, but the film hasn't helped her much. However, with the actress not signing any new movies or not being given fresh film offers, it came out that she herself took a break to focus on her studies. A series of underwhelming films, repetitive glamorous roles, and the same dance-energy template have worked against her, and then came the 'lack of hits' moment. This led to Telugu offers drying up. And

Sreeleela is also hurt by those flops, it seems. Like how the likes of Rakul Preet, Ileana, and others have done earlier, she's now looking forward to board a flight to Mumbai, says sources. Her big Bollywood debut opposite Kartik Aaryan in Anurag Basu's romantic drama has already generated decent buzz. Without much noise or publicity, Sreeleela has already completed another Hindi film, Diler, starring Ibrahim Ali Khan, son of Saif Ali Khan. The film was shot extensively in London under Maddock Films banner. If these two films work, then Sreeleela will have a place in Bollywood.

Apparently, the actress decided to hike her remuneration aggressively at a time when Telugu producers are already struggling with rising budgets and poor theatrical revenues. That instantly made many banners re-think. Instead of running behind Telugu offers at this moment, Sreeleela seems to have made a calculated shift towards Bollywood.



Dragon glimpse: NTR turns deadly assassin in narcotics world

The much-awaited glimpse of NTR's new film "Dragon" is finally out. Titled "Dragon Glimpse," the video introduces the film's key characters, beginning with heroine Rukmini Vasanth, followed by the villains controlling the drug empire, NTR as a ruthless assassin, and Anil Kapoor as a police officer. The glimpse opens in director Prashanth Neel's signature narrative style, tracing the origins of British colonization in India.

According to the film's premise, the British initially arrived for steel, cotton, and spices, but what made them stay for 250 years was a plant: the opium poppy. The narration further explains that the highest cultivation of heroin takes place in two regions, Afghanistan and the Golden Triangle, with the British once controlling the opium trade. After the British left India, they allegedly handed over the business to two powerful entities, the Afghan Trading Company and the Golden Trading Company.

The narrative then shifts to Rukmini Vasanth's character, who speaks about how God created nature, animals, humans, and finally the devil. The devil is Luger. NTR appears as Luger, the assassin-in-chief.

NTR sports a fierce new avatar with a lean yet chiselled physique. His intense screen presence, coupled with a chilling dialogue about forgetting everything once the trigger is pulled, hints at the brutal carnage unleashed by his character amid heaps of dead bodies.

The trailer ends with the introduction of Raghuvver Rathod, the head of the Narcotics Bureau, played by Anil Kapoor. The final shot shows NTR covered in blood and breathing heavily after a violent confrontation.

Released on the occasion of NTR's birthday on May 20, the "Dragon Glimpse" has instantly created massive buzz among fans.

"Dragon," with music composed by Ravi Basrur and produced by Prashanth Neel, is slated for release on June 11, 2027. The four-minute glimpse stands out for introducing all the major villain characters while effectively establishing the film's expansive backdrop. Although the visual tone and narrative style resemble Neel's previous films like "KGF" and "Salaar," the glimpse remains riveting and packed with high-octane action.

Janhvi Kapoor Moving To Allu Arjun Now

Janhvi Kapoor is clearly not slowing down in Telugu cinema. Even before one big film reaches theatres, she is already shifting focus onto another massive pan-India project. Immediately after Jr NTR's Devaraa, the actress got Ram Charan's Peddi. And now that the latter is hitting cinemas, it's coming out that the Bollywood diva has found another big project here in Tollywood.

Other day, the actress already openly stated that she wants to do more Telugu films as she feels that the Telugu industry is her home. After wrapping up the promotional activities for Ram Charan's Peddi, Janhvi will reportedly be allocated dates for Allu Arjun's Raaka, directed by Atlee. Sources say the actress will join the film's sets from next month, with the

team planning to shoot some crucial scenes featuring Bunny and Janhvi. Interestingly, her presence in the film is not yet been announced, but it may be announced after she joins the team officially.

In fact, Deepika Padukone is said to be the main female lead in Raaka, while names like Mrunal Thakur and Rashmika Mandanna are also associated with the project, which is in the news. Now with Janhvi likely joining the film, the casting of heroines is getting loud and over the top, we have to say. Probably with the actor playing multiple roles in the movie, it looks like there are multiple heroines as well.

Given Atlee's larger-than-life filmmaking style and Allu Arjun's post-Pushpa global image, Raaka is being mounted on an enormous scale with several Hollywood technicians working on the film. Most of the shoot is currently happening inside massive indoor sets erected in Mumbai.

Ram's Biggest Gamble Begins

Ram Pothineni, the charming Tollywood hero who debuted as a leading man almost two decades ago, is now gearing up for the biggest experiment of his life. After many directors failed to give him the required success as he chose many commercial films, and illogical scripts that made sense on paper but not on screen, the actor has decided to give a 'break' to himself. He's now coming up with a film through which he is debuting as a director too. Recently, Ram has come up with the first look of the movie, saying that a lone wolf is getting ready to fight against the system. That more or less indicates that Ram is fighting like a lone wolf with the silver screen, and took the megaphone into his hands to give that success to himself. Quick update from the movie is that the makers are in talks with SJ Suryah, the most in-demand actor for negative roles these days. Though Ram had first thought of Fahadh Fasil, the Malayalam actor has quoted more than ₹10 crores as pay packet, and hence they backed off. Now, remuneration discussions are going on with SJ Surya, with this being the actor's own production, produced by his younger brother.



Rhea announces SM break

Rhea Chakraborty has announced a temporary break from social media, saying she wants to focus more on "lived moments" rather than spending time scrolling online.

Taking to Instagram on Tuesday, the actress shared an emotional note with her 3.6 million followers. She wrote that the constant noise of social media and the pressure to keep up had start-

ed feeling overwhelming. "Lately, I've been missing myself a little. The constant noise, the scrolling, the keeping up — it's all started to feel heavier than I expected. I miss being present without thinking about capturing the moment. I miss quiet. I miss simply being," she wrote. Rhea further stated that she is stepping away from Instagram for some time to reconnect with herself and enjoy real-life experiences. "So, I'm taking a step back for a while — to slow down, breathe a little deeper, and reconnect with what feels real. Choosing lived moments over posted ones, for now. See you soon," she added. Rhea Chakraborty was widely in the media spotlight following the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput. She had also acted in Telugu films like "Tuneega Tuneega."

Chiranjeevi & Balakrishna, Powerful Launch On Same Day

They are the two stalwarts of Telugu cinema right now. One is sitting on the top of the throne for a long time, and one is enthraling the masses with his choicest films for decades. Both are currently in their senior-most age, with one touching 70 years and the other at 65, and they are still dishing out whistle-worthy mass entertainers that are spinning huge money at the box office. And now, they are getting ready for a massive blast on the same day.

Megastar Chiranjeevi has recently scored the ₹300+ crores blockbuster with Mana Shankara Varaprasad Garu early this year. Though Balakrishna's last outing Akhanda 2 hasn't impressed many, surely his other mass films have kept delivering the needful at the box office. And these senior superstars of Telugu cinema are now



heading for their new movie launches on the same day.

On May 21st, Chiranjeevi's next film, directed by his Waltair Veerayya maker KS Bobby, and bankrolled by KVN Productions, is getting launched. On the very same day, Balakrishna's next, directed by another senior filmmaker, Koratala Siva, is also getting launched. These are two proven mass directors, directing two of the biggest stars of Telugu cinema, and surprisingly, both the films getting launched on the same day are quite massive. It's coming out that both the films will be targeting a Sankranti 2027 release also.