

# HYDERABAD HEADLINES

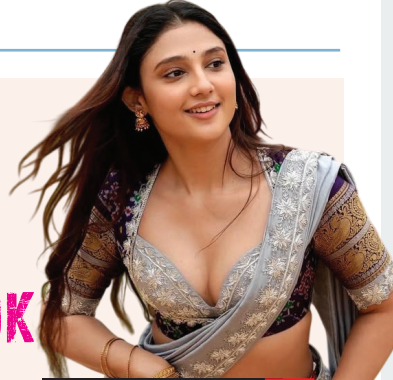
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## KKR WIN LOW SCORING THRILLER

STADIUM 11

## RITIKA RADIATES CONFIDENCE AND GRACE IN GLAM LOOK



BOX -OFFICE 12



## PM RECEIVES AGRICOLA MEDAL FROM THE FAO OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN ROME

NEW DELHI, MAY 20

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi was today conferred with the prestigious Agrícola Medal for 2026 by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, at the FAO Headquarters in Rome. The award was conferred in recognition of his exceptional leadership to address food security, sustainable agriculture and rural development in India and at the global level.

Prime Minister received the award from Dr. Qu Dongyu, Director General of FAO. He dedicated the honour to Indian farmers and the Indian agricultural scientific community, who tirelessly work to ensure food security and nutrition for Indians and for people around the World. He underlined that the recognition was a tribute to India's commitment to human welfare, food security and sustainable development. Highlighting the centrality of agrarian life in India, Prime Minister emphasized that agriculture was a sacred bond between Mother Earth and the Indian people.

Prime Minister noted that India's scientific and innovation-based approach to farming was fostering a sustainable, climate-resilient and future-ready eco-

system. In this endeavor, he expressed that practices such as 'Per Drop More Crop' and mission-based approach to micro-irrigation and precision farming were guiding its agricultural policies. Elaborating on tech-based farming solutions, he stated that Digital Public Infrastructure, AI-based advisory systems, drones, remote-sensing technologies and sensor-based machinery were helping Indian farmers to reap rich harvest and higher farm incomes. He stated that in the last 10 years, India had developed around 3,000 climate-resilient crop varieties. Prime Minister noted that India's science-driven agriculture is strengthening global food security, in particular for countries in the Global South.

Prime Minister recalled that as a founding member of FAO, India was privileged to work with the organization to foster global food security, sustainable agriculture and a hunger-free world. He thanked FAO for working with India to promote healthy food choices through the celebration of the International Year of Millets.

Prime Minister Modi's visit to FAO Headquarters was the first by an Indian Head of Government in the last 30 years.

# TG to come up with policy to encourage GCCs 'Beyond Hyderabad'

CM Revanth Reddy instructs officials during IT, Industries departmental review meeting

- State government aiming to decentralise job creation in underserved areas in Core Urban Regional Economy (CURE) and 'Beyond CURE', with goal to position Tier-2, Tier-3 cities as next growth engines
- To explore spreading out data centre establishment in underserved areas of Hyderabad and beyond
- Net-zero principles, while maintaining global standards, to be followed in Bharat Future City works
- Society to be formed for creating 'Invest Telangana' - a dedicated investment promotion agency
- Accelerate adoption of T-Fiber internet connections by all government offices in 3 months

Hyderabad, May 20: In view of massive interest from global conglomerates in setting up Global Capability Centres (GCCs) in Telangana, Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri. A. Revanth Reddy on Wednesday asked officials to formulate a GCC policy so that companies opting to establish beyond the Hyderabad Core Urban Regional Economy (CURE) area are encouraged and incentivised. He instructed officials to encourage new GCCs along Nizamabad, Karimnagar and Warangal highways, classified between CURE and beyond CURE areas.

The Chief Minister, along with Hon'ble Minister D. Sridhar Babu, held a review meeting on various issues under the IT and Industries departments. Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao, B. Ajith Reddy, Special Secretary to CM, K. Shashanka, VC & MD, TGIC, Anudeep Durishetty, Joint Secy., IT&C, Nikhil Chakravarthi, Director, Commissioner of Industries,



and other officials attended the meeting.

The CM recommended that a few clusters be identified 'Beyond CURE', with a view to encourage decentralising GCCs to Tier-2 and Tier-3 locations. Underserved areas like locations along Nizamabad, Karimnagar and Warangal highways may also be encouraged for establishing GCCs as well as Data centres, he said.

The CM asserted that net-zero principles, while maintaining the highest of global standards, are to be followed in

undertaking engineering works in Bharat Future City (BFC), adding that priority be given to creating trunk infrastructure in the various proposed zones.

Consultations will be initiated with the Government of India towards establishing one of the five regional medical hubs announced during the Union Budget recently, in the Health City under BFC. "If needed, I will take this up with the Hon'ble Prime Minister." Officials were asked to accelerate the works in the

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## People Must Remain Alert Due to Severe Heat Conditions

Hyderabad: In view of the weather department's warnings about severe heatwaves and rising temperatures, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has advised people to remain alert and cautious. The Chief Minister instructed officials in the northern Telangana districts, where temperatures are expected to be particularly high, to take all necessary precautionary measures. He directed authorities to ensure adequate availability of ORS packets and to pay special attention to drinking water supply and uninterrupted electricity services.

## Telangana Rakshana Sena Appoints In-Charges for Flag Festival

Hyderabad: The Telangana Rakshana Sena (TRS) Flag Festival program began on Wednesday. The "Jenda Panduga" (Flag Festival) celebrations will be conducted across the state from the 20th of this month until next month.

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## Saraswati Anthya Pushkaralu Begin Today

First holy dip to be taken by Kanchi Swami Sri Vijayendra Saraswati and State Governor Shiva Pratap Shukla

Hyderabad, May 20: The state government has made extensive arrangements for the Saraswati Anthya Pushkaralu being held at Kaleshwaram. The Pushkar bathing rituals will be conducted for 12 days, from May 21 to June 1. Since an estimated 3 to 4 million devotees are expected to attend, the government has taken large-scale measures to ensure their convenience and safety.

Keeping in mind the experiences from last year's Saraswati Adi Pushkaralu, officials have taken strict preventive measures to avoid any inconvenience during these Anthya Pushkaralu. Considering the severe summer heat, coir mats, shaded shelters, and ORS packets have been arranged at the Pushkar ghats. As a large number of devotees are expected, vehicle parking facilities and BT roads have

been developed at 23 locations around the ghats. The government has allocated ₹30.63 crore for the Pushkar-related works. First Holy Dip by Kanchi Swami Vijayendra Saraswati and Governor Shiva Pratap Shukla On the first day of the Pushkaralu, May 21, at 5:43 AM, Kanchi Peethadhipati Jagadguru Sri Shankara Vijayendra Saraswati and State

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# THE COCKROACHES HAVE DECLARED WAR

### India's Wi Fi Generation Turns Humiliation Into A Political Street Fight

A casual courtroom remark exploded into a digital uprising. A sarcastic tweet from a Boston based Indian student triggered an online political storm that now stretches from Instagram reels to national television debates. The Cockroach Janta Party, launched by Abhijeet Dipke, has become the loudest meme driven expression of India's restless youth anger over unemployment, examination scandals, institutional distrust and elite disconnect. Wrapped in satire, powered by smartphones and sharpened by resentment, this strange insect themed rebellion has exposed a dangerous truth simmering beneath India's digital democracy. The youth is no longer whispering frustration. It is broadcasting it with savage humour.

BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

India's political establishment has finally collided with a generation it does not fully understand. This generation does not gather under banyan trees listening to party workers reciting ideological poetry. It does not wait for district committees, trade union speeches or election vans blaring slogans through dusty streets. It gathers on Instagram. It organises through memes. It fights with screenshots. And now, it marches under the banner of a cockroach.

**INSULTED. IGNORED. INFURIATED.**

## COCKROACHES STORM THE REPUBLIC!

HOW A SINGLE COURTROOM REMARK TRIGGERED INDIA'S BIGGEST DIGITAL YOUTH UPRISING

WHAT IF ALL THE COCKROACHES COME TOGETHER? - ABHIJEET DIPKE

ABHIJEET DIPKE  
FOUNDER, COCKROACH JANTA PARTY  
BOSTON UNIVERSITY PH.D STUDENT  
EX-ASP SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIST

100,000+ SIGN-UPS IN DAYS!  
GEN Z HAS ENTERED POLITICS. AND THEY'RE NOT ASKING PERMISSION.

VOICE OF THE LAZY & UNEMPLOYED  
WE ARE NOT PARASITES. WE ARE THE FUTURE!  
HO! WHEREVER THE WI-FI WORKS  
UNEMPLOYED UNBOtherED UNSTOPPABLE!

JOIN THE MOVEMENT!  
1. UNEMPLOYED  
2. LAZY  
3. CHRONICALLY ONLINE  
4. CAN RANT PROFESSIONALLY  
5. REGISTER NOW!  
COCKROACHJANTAPARTY.ORG

**THE CJP 5 DEMANDS**

- NO POST-RETIREMENT RAJYA SABHA SEATS FOR CHIEF JUSTICES!
- ARREST CEC UNDER UAPA FOR DELETING LEGIT VOTES!
- 50% RESERVATION FOR WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT & CABINET!
- CANCEL LICENCES OF AMBANI/JOSHI MEDIA HOUSES FROM ELECTIONS & PUBLIC OFFICE!
- 20-YEAR BAN ON DEFECTING MEMBERS FROM ELECTIONS & PUBLIC OFFICE!

WE ARE LAZY. WE ARE ONLINE. WE RANT. THEREFORE, WE EXIST. AND WE VOTE. - COCKROACH JANTA PARTY

The rise of the Cockroach Janta Party is not merely another internet comedy circus. It is a political symptom bursting out of India's crowded digital bloodstream.

The trigger arrived during Supreme Court proceedings concerning fake degrees and dubious professional claims. Chief Justice Surya Kant reportedly criticised certain individuals who fail to secure places in professions and later reinvent themselves as social media activists, RTI campaigners or permanent outrage merchants. The controversial "cockroach" and "parasite"

references detonated instantly across cyberspace.

The court later clarified that the remarks targeted fraudulent degree holders and not Indian youth at large. The clarification was institutionally proper.

But modern digital politics does not wait for clarifications. By the time official explanations arrive, the meme factory has already completed production. And into that combustible atmosphere stepped a thirty year old political communications

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

**VICAT**  
TRUST. LEGACY. FOREVER.

## CEMENTING DREAMS WITH SUPERIOR STRENGTH.

**Bharathi CEMENT**  
SUPERIOR QUALITY. GUARANTEED.

**ULTRAFAST**  
FAST SETTING CEMENT

GERMAN TECHNOLOGY  
ROBOTIC QUALITY CONTROL  
TAMPER PROOF PACKING

**3 TIMES BETTER**

Net Qty 50 kg  
MRP Rs  
Inclusive of all taxes

## Telangana Rakshana Sena Appoints In-Charges for Flag Festival

FROM PAGE 1  
In this context, TRS chief Kalvakuntla Kavitha appointed district-wise and constituency-wise in-charges and state observers for organizing the festival. In-charges were appointed for all 33 districts and 119 Assembly constituencies.

The month-long TRS Flag Festival will be supervised by district in-charges, constituency in-charges, and state observers. **List of District In-Charges and State Observers for 33 Districts**  
According to the official list released by the party, senior leaders and active organisers have been entrusted with responsibilities to coordinate district-level activities, oversee organisational expansion and strengthen grassroots outreach ahead of upcoming political programmes.

For Nizamabad district, Rangu Naveen Achari has been appointed as District In-Charge, while Karimilla Babu Rao will serve as State Observer. Aduragatla Sampath Goud and Kola Srinivas were assigned responsibilities for Kamareddy district.

In the north Telangana region, Rangineni Srinivas Rao was named District In-Charge for Adilabad with Mekala Lalitha Yadav as State Observer, while Jutu Chandrasekhar and Manthani Naveen Reddy were appointed for Nirmal district. Vinod Karimilla and Baburao Rathod were given charge of Komaram Bheem Asifabad district.

For Mancherial district, the party appointed Udari Chandra Mohan Goud as District In-Charge and Varalakshmi Manchala as State Observer. Karimnagar district responsibilities were handed to Chanda Lakshminarayana Gupta and Kandadi Manipal Reddy.

In the central Telangana belt, Pandla Chandrasekhar was appointed for Medak district with Appala Narendra Yadav as Observer, while Padigapati Vikranth Reddy and Devender Reddy Kunduru were assigned to Nalgonda district. K. L. N. Rao and Vijay Garine will oversee Suryapet district.

Kottala Yadagiri and Loka Ravi Chandra were appointed for Siddipet district, while Sangareddy district responsibilities were entrusted to Masanna Gari Balayya as District In-Charge and Nelloju Shalva Chari along with Desoju Sandeep as State Observers.

For Rajanna Sircilla district, M. D. Majeed Abdul was named District In-Charge and Kongari Dharani Rani as Observer. Peddapalli district received two District In-Charges — Komuraya Salendra and L. Venkatesh — with Ponnamma Balaji Rao appointed as Observer.

In Warangal and Hanamkonda districts, Nadipelli Venkateswara Rao will serve as District In-Charge while Syed

Ismail was appointed State Observer. Cherlapalli Amardeep Goud and Madhavi Maripelli were assigned responsibilities for Jagtial district.

The party also announced Kushana Naresh Netha and Medala Abhilash Goud for Jayashankar Bhupalpally district, while Srikanth Goud Nalamasa and Kishan Nayak Banoth were appointed for Mahabubabad district.

For Jangaon district, Chiluka Praveen was appointed District In-Charge with Kalaburg Dayakar Reddy as Observer. Nangavath Rajesh Nayak and Medala Abhilash Goud were assigned responsibilities for Mulugu district.

In the Khammam region, Gattu Karuna and Chalasani Vishnu Murthy were named District In-Charge and Observer respectively, while Devalla Veeranna and Riyaz Ahmed were appointed for Bhadradi Kothagudem district.

Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district responsibilities were entrusted to Chanduputla Sujith Rao and Pawan Rao Ponugoti. In Mahabubnagar district, Mettukadi Prabhakar Mudiraj and Gunjapadugu Hariprasad were appointed.

Ponugoti Sripathi Rao and Surender G Hakinkari were assigned to Nagarkurnool district, while Kandur Malathi Reddy and Kotla Mahender Reddy were appointed for Wanaparthy district.

For Narayanpet district, Gavinolla Srinivas and Pulluri Srinivas Rao were given responsibilities, while Gongalla Ranjith Kumar and R. V. R. Prasad were appointed for Jogulamba Gadwal district.

In the Hyderabad metropolitan region, Naresh Prajapathi and Tandra Srinivas Rao were assigned to Ranga Reddy district, while Kola Srinivas and Lakavath Roop Singh were appointed for Vikarabad district.

Medchal-Malkajgiri district will be overseen by Ramidi Venkat Reddy as District In-Charge, with Rangu Naveen Achari and Kishore Thaninti serving as State Observers.

For Hyderabad district, Bhagavatula Sai Mahesh was appointed District In-Charge and M. D. Abdul Saleem as Observer. In Secunderabad district, Vijay Garine will serve as District In-Charge while David Gajji was named State Observer.

Party leaders stated that the appointments were made with the objective of strengthening coordination between district units and the state leadership while accelerating membership drives and public outreach programmes across Telangana.

# “I Will Not Tolerate Negligence on Law and Order”

**Hyderabad:** Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy made it clear that negligence regarding law and order would not be tolerated under any circumstances. He advised the police department to be prepared to face emerging challenges.

The Chief Minister held a meeting with senior police officials at the MCR HRD Bodhi Pavilion. Chief Secretary Ramakrishna Rao, State Security Advisor Shivdhar Reddy, DGP CV Anand, along with police commissioners and IG-rank officers, attended the meeting.

The Chief Minister stated firmly that corruption in the police department would not be tolerated at any cost. He said postings should be made strictly on the basis of merit. He instructed the DGP to frame and implement rules ensuring that officers from the rank of Sub-Inspector to non-cadre SP, after receiving promotions, should work in other departments for two years.

He emphasized the need for better coordination among senior officials and directed that information must be shared whenever officials leave district headquarters.

**“Police Department Must Be Prepared for New Challenges”**

**“Postings Will Be Based Only on Merit”**

**“Strict Action Against Illegal Flex Banners From Now On”**

**CM Revanth Reddy at Meeting with Senior Police Officials**



The Chief Minister also instructed that QR code systems should be introduced in all police stations to regularly gather public feedback. He urged police officials to crack down strongly on food adulteration, expressing concern that adulterated food is contributing to the rise in cancer cases. He directed officials to formulate a special law and strengthen regulations against food adulteration.

Revanth Reddy said the special meeting was organized to communicate the government's ideas and expectations. He stated that every officer in the police department must function within the system and warned

that behavior beyond the system would not be accepted.

He reiterated that negligence in maintaining law and order would not be tolerated and advised all officers to act responsibly. He directed that crime reviews must be conducted regularly and SPs should undertake district tours. IG-level officers, he said, should continuously monitor developments in districts.

The Chief Minister suggested introducing electric vehicles into the police department, strengthening night patrolling, and regularly reviewing rowdy sheets. He advised replacing outdated weapons with modern

ones and stressed the importance of drone policing.

He also directed officials to make effective use of the Command Control Center and further improve the CCTV surveillance system. Adequate precautions should be taken during programs involving celebrities and VIPs, he added.

The Chief Minister stated that strict action against drugs and ganja should continue. He suggested establishing special de-addiction centers for drug victims. Senior officials were instructed to study cybercrime control measures and prepare a comprehensive report.

He pointed out the need to in-

crease forensic centers and data centers and suggested selecting personnel for these roles during police training itself. He also recommended introducing special cybercrime courses for the police department at the Skills University. The CM instructed officials to strengthen the vigilance department and deal more strictly with those causing losses to government revenue. He also said the fire department should focus on preventive measures to stop fire accidents before they occur.

He directed the Municipal Department and HYDRAA to coordinate and prepare a comprehensive report on the fire department by June 15. He also advised police, traffic police, HYDRAA, and municipal administration departments to work together on manhole maintenance.

Questioning why no action was being taken against the indiscriminate installation of flex banners in the city, the Chief Minister instructed senior police officials to ensure stricter enforcement. He ordered police commissioners and GHMC officials to act firmly from now on to control illegal flex banners.

## Spiritual Heritage Walk Casts Spotlight on Kesaragutta Temple

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI, MAY 20,

On May 20, 2026, the Telangana government announced that Heritage Walks would be held in districts to highlight places of historic and cultural importance. In Medchal-Malkajgiri district, the Tourism Department selected the ancient Kesaragutta Temple, dedicated to Shiva, as the local site for the event.

The Heritage Walk began at 9:00 AM at the Nandi statue near Kesaragutta and proceeded up to the temple. Participants included the Medchal-Malkajgiri District Collector Manu Choudhary, Additional Collector Faizan Ahmed, District Youth and Sports Officer and District Tourism Officer (in-charge) I. Vijay Kumar, Elders and officials such as Shivaprasad and District Employment Officer Radhik, as well as students,



local youth, temple priests, teachers, and public representatives. About 150 people took part in the walk.

After the walk, Tatakam Venkatesh Sharma, Chairman of the Kesaragutta Temple Committee, welcomed the Col-

lector with flowers. Priests performed prayers inside the temple, and scholars blessed the Collector and Additional Collector with Vedic chants.

During his remarks, the Collector spoke about the Brahmotsavam, the

temple's annual festival, which he said attracts devotees from across the country and abroad. He emphasized the district administration's duty to provide facilities for devotees and urged for new improvements each year.

He noted that many national and international donors have supported temple development and that funds could be increased with government and donor support. He also suggested that ideas for tourism development be proposed by the Temple Executive Officer and pursued at both government and district levels.

The Additional Collector highlighted the temple's spiritual and tourism significance and said he would support development efforts after understanding the area's unique qualities through the Endowment Department.

CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

# THE COCKROACHES HAVE..

FROM PAGE 1  
student from Boston University with one line that captured the mood of a frustrated generation. “What if all the cockroaches come together?” India laughed first. Then India joined.

**ABHIJEET DIPKE THE MEME STRATEGIST WHO UNDERSTOOD THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DIGITAL ANGER**

Abhijeet Dipke is not a traditional politician in pressed white khaki kurta and polished rhetoric. He belongs to the rhetorical laboratory of the smartphone era.

Educated in journalism in Pune and later pursuing public relations studies in America, Dipke reportedly worked with the digital operations surrounding the Aam Aadmi Party during the Delhi election cycle and beyond. Meme warfare, parody videos, youth targeting and emotional narrative management were already part of his toolkit long before the cockroach storm arrived.

That background explains why the movement exploded with such precision. This was not random internet chaos. It was emotionally calibrated satire.

Within days, tens of thousands reportedly signed up through Google forms and social media platforms. The movement proudly described itself as “The Voice of the Lazy and Unemployed.” Its fictional headquarters was listed as “Wherever the Wi-Fi works.” That single line probably reveals more about urban Indian youth psychology than a hundred government surveys.

**THE NEW POLITICAL HEADQUARTERS**

Not party offices.  
Not Parliament corridors.  
Not TV studios.

Just one exhausted generation sitting in dimly lit rooms refreshing timelines and wondering whether the future still has space for them.

**THE COCKROACH BECAME A SYMBOL OF SURVIVAL**

Political symbols usually emerge from mythology, nationalism or revolutionary struggle. But this one emerged from insult. That is what makes the phenomenon extraordinary.

Young Indians did not merely laugh at the cockroach metaphor. They emotionally occupied it. The same insect became a metaphor for survival in a system many believe treats educated youth as disposable inventory.

Mocked but resilient. Ignored but impossible to eliminate. Humiliated yet alive. That emotional inversion transformed satire into identity.

Suddenly social media timelines flooded with cockroach mascots dressed like activists, mock campaign graphics, satirical manifestos and digital street theatre aimed at institutions, politicians, media channels and elite power circles. And beneath every joke lay real anxieties.

NEET controversies. Exam leaks. Delayed recruitments. Shrinking white collar opportunities. A brutal employment market hiding beneath optimistic economic headlines.

The Cockroach Janta Party did not invent these frustrations. It merely gave them a mascot ugly enough to be unforgettable.

“A Republic that produces millions of graduates but too few opportunities eventually manufactures sarcasm as a political weapon.”

**THE MANIFESTO THAT MIXED COMEDY WITH COMBUSTIBLE POLITICS**

The movement's manifesto was deliberately theatrical. But its targets were deadly serious.

No post retirement Rajya Sabha rewards for Chief Justices. Harsh action against electoral malpractice. Fifty percent representation for women in Parliament and Cabinet. Punishment for political defectors treating democracy like a transfer-

able contract. Aggressive attacks on concentrated media ownership and so called “Godi media.” Support for students trapped in examination chaos.

The brilliance of the manifesto lay in its structure. Every outrageous line carried a real political wound underneath. That is why the movement spread so rapidly among digitally hyperactive young Indians who increasingly feel trapped between motivational speeches and shrinking opportunities.

The old establishment still believes youth anger arrives carrying stones. Today it arrives carrying memes.

**THE INTERNET HAS CHANGED POLITICAL MOBILISATION**

Yesterday's revolution needed pamphlets. Today's outrage needs only one viral reel and a stable mobile connection.

**INDIA'S POLITICAL CLASS IS STARING AT A NEW CREATURE**

Traditional parties know how to fight opposition rallies. They know how to manage TV debates. They know how to negotiate caste arithmetic and coalition mathematics.

But meme insurgencies are different.

They are decentralised. They are emotionally contagious. And they move faster than political press conferences.

This explains why opposition figures such as Mahua Moitra and others quickly interacted with the phenomenon online while critics accused the movement of carrying hidden partisan motives due to Dipke's earlier political associations.

Both sides may continue arguing over intent. But the larger social reality remains undeniable. The movement resonated because millions of young Indians already carried emotional fatigue waiting for expression. That frustration existed long before

the cockroach arrived.

**THE DAY AN INSULT TURNED INTO A DIGITAL FLAG**

Across urban India, the cockroach is treated as a creature of disgust. But politically, the symbol achieved something remarkable.

It converted shame into solidarity. Supporters began celebrating the insect as a metaphor for endurance inside a system they believe ignores their anxieties. Every joke, every meme and every satirical slogan reinforced the same message.

“You may dismiss us.”  
“But you cannot erase us.”  
That psychological shift explains why the movement travelled so explosively across India's digital ecosystem. The symbol itself became rebellion.

**WHEN MOCKERY BECOMES A MOVEMENT**

The real story of the Cockroach Janta Party is not whether it contests elections or survives beyond the news cycle. The real story is what it reveals about India in 2026.

A generation raised on digital aspiration now confronts economic uncertainty, examination scandals, relentless competition and institutional distrust all at once. Many feel politically unheard yet constantly judged.

**That combination is volatile.**

The ruling establishment may dismiss the movement as online noise. The opposition may try to convert it into electoral opportunity. But neither side should underestimate the warning hidden beneath the satire. Because history repeatedly shows that societies enter dangerous territory when citizens stop believing power listens to sincerity and start believing only mockery can force attention.

India's screen generation has discovered that ridicule travels faster than ideology. And now the cockroaches are marching with full signal strength.

## Saraswati Anthya Pushkaralu Begin Today

FROM PAGE 1  
Governor Shiva Pratap Shukla will formally inaugurate the Anthya Pushkaralu by taking the ceremonial holy dip.

From May 21 to June 1, a prominent spiritual leader from a major Peetham will participate daily in the sacred bathing rituals. Daily homams (fire rituals) will be conducted in the mornings, and large-scale cultural programs have been organized in the evenings.

For the convenience of devotees, 90 shuttle buses have been arranged. Along with rescue teams, 100 specially trained swimmers have been deployed at the Saraswati Ghat and river areas.

**Special Museum Set Up at a Cost of 1.20 Crore**

Under the supervision of the Endowments Department, a special museum is being established at a cost of ₹1.20 crore. The Nagendra Swamy Temple has also been renovated with an expenditure of ₹30 lakh. Large-scale arrangements have been made for daily harathi ceremonies, homams, and Teppotsavam (float festival) during the Pushkaralu.

To facilitate devotees, exten-

sive infrastructure has been created. Around 500 toilets have been specially installed, and two overhead water reservoirs have been built for drinking water supply. Drinking water and toilet facilities have also been arranged at all 23 vehicle parking centers.

**Medical Camps with 300 Medical Personnel**

Special medical camps have been set up across 23 zones at the Kaleshwaram Pushkar Ghat. Around 300 doctors and paramedical staff have been specially appointed for these services. Ambulances have been stationed at all major locations. The Mahadevpur Primary Health Centre has been designated as a referral hospital.

**Parking Arrangements for 1.7 Lakh Vehicles Across 245 Acres**

Officials estimate that around 170,000 vehicles will arrive for the Saraswati Anthya Pushkaralu this time. Accordingly, parking facilities have been arranged across 245 acres of land. About 200 CCTV cameras have been installed in parking areas, ghats, temples, and surrounding locations.

Special LED lights have been



installed along the routes leading to the Pushkar bathing ghats. Around 300 sanitation workers have been appointed to maintain cleanliness throughout the 12-day event. Measures have also been taken to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply at the Pushkar ghats.

**Deployment of 100 Expert Swimmers**

To prevent any untoward incidents during the holy bathing rituals, around 100 expert swimmers have been deployed. In addition, safety boats, life rings, and SDRF teams have also been stationed. A media center has been established to provide continuous updates about the Pushkar events to the public.

## TG to come up with policy to...

FROM PAGE 1

proposed AI City in BFC, after studying the best of practices in creating AI infrastructure across the world. He also asked officials to make sure works in BFC are expedited so that the foundation stone laying for various facilities in the industrial corridor of BFC is held. The CM ordered officials to encourage all companies getting land allotment in BFC to sign MoUs towards skilling and certification of the workforce to serve their talent needs.

With regard to the creation of a dedicated investment promotion agency 'Invest Telangana',

he suggested to adopt the best practices from other states with a governance structure to cater to end to end solution for the investors and companies. He suggested that senior officials of certain departments like Energy and Finance be designated as 'Special Invitees' for smooth clearances and operations, while officials from the IT and Industries departments would serve as regular appointees.

A society would be formed for 'Invest Telangana', and the structure would be designed in such a way that it is a vibrant, dynamic functioning agency for aggres-

sive investment promotion for the state. The CM suggested that an escort officer be dedicated to cater to end to end needs of prospective organisations, right from arrival in Hyderabad to grounding of operations.

The CM also instructed officials to chalk out a plan to ensure all government offices in the state shift to the usage of T-Fiber internet connection, from private operators. Officials have informed that in this regard, orders worth Rs 54 crore have been secured in the last six months from government offices which shifted to T-Fiber internet.

## Congress Party has made it a habit to repeatedly abuse and insult Modi

**NV Subhash, BJP Chief Spokesperson and Media Incharge Telangana**

**HYDERABAD**

The latest derogatory remark made by Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, calling Prime Minister Modi a "Gaddar", is highly condemnable, irresponsible, and shameful.

This statement is a direct reflection of the mindset of the Congress First Family, which has never been able to accept that a person from a poor and humble OBC background has risen through hard work, dedi-

cation, and public service to become the Prime Minister of the country for a record third term.

Today's abuse is not new. Over the years, Congress leaders have insulted Narendra Modi more than 90 times — from calling him "Maut ka Saudagar" in Gujarat to using the most indecent and objectionable language against him time and again.

No amount of condemnation is enough for Rahul Gandhi's indecent, objectionable, and shameful statement. Rahul Gandhi and the Congress Party will have to pay a heavy political price for their unfortunate and irresponsible

remarks. The frustration and despair arising out of continuous defeats of 99 elections have now become clearly visible in Rahul Gandhi's words and behaviour.

A party that has repeatedly been rejected by the people is now resorting to personal abuse because it has no vision, no agenda, and no constructive politics to offer.

Rahul Gandhi must answer the people of this country: Is eliminating Naxalism treachery? Is securing the nation's borders and protecting India's land treachery? Is enhancing the honour and prestige of Bharat's Tricolour across the

world treachery? Is working for the poor, farmers, youth, women, and deprived sections of society treachery?

Over the past 12 years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has undertaken historic initiatives for the welfare of villages, the poor, farmers, labourers, the exploited, and the deprived sections of society. This is precisely why 140 crore Indians continue to repose their faith and trust in his leadership.

Whenever Rahul Gandhi and the Congress Party have insulted Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the people of the country have given a strong

democratic response by showing even greater blessings upon the Prime Minister, extending their full support, and ensuring his victory.

The people of Bharat have repeatedly rejected the arrogance, entitlement, and abusive politics of the Congress Party.

The more Congress abuses Prime Minister Modi, the stronger the people's support for him becomes. Rahul Gandhi and the Congress Party must immediately apologise to the nation for insulting the elected Prime Minister of India and hurting the sentiments of 140 crore Indians.

## GITAM Scholar Awarded Ph.D. in Chemistry

**HYDERABAD**

GITAM Deemed to be University has announced that Dr. Ketha Swarupa has been awarded a Ph.D. in Chemistry under the guidance of Dr. Chithaluri Sudhakar.

Her doctoral research, titled "Design, Synthesis and Biological Evaluation of Chalcone Incorporated Pyridine-Pyrimidine and 1,2,4-Oxadiazole Incorporated Indolizine-Thiadiazole Derivatives," focuses on the development of novel chemical compounds with promising medicinal applications, particularly in cancer therapeutics.

As part of the research, Dr. Swarupa designed and synthesized two series of biologically significant compounds by integrating pharmacologically im-



portant chemical scaffolds. The synthesized compounds were structurally characterized using standard analytical techniques, including NMR spectroscopy, and subsequently evaluated for their biological activity. Several compounds demonstrated encouraging results, highlighting their potential for future drug development.

The study contributes valuable insights to the field of medicinal chemistry and opens new avenues for the development of effective therapeutic agents for cancer treatment.

The university leadership, including Prof. D.S. Rao, D.V.V.S.R. Varma, Dr. M. Reza, and Dr. Gousia Begum, congratulated Dr. Swarupa on her academic achievement and appreciated her valuable contribution to cancer research and medicinal chemistry.

## Revanth invited to FTCCI excellence awards ceremony

**HYDERABAD**

R. Ravi Kumar, President of Federation of Telangana Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI), Zaheerabad MP Suresh Shetkar, FTCCI director Sangeetha, and FTCCI excellence awards chairman Bhaskar Reddy called on Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy at the Bodhi Pavilion in the MCR HRD Institute, Hyderabad on Wednesday.

The FTCCI delegation extended an invitation to the Chief Minister to attend the FTCCI Excellence Awards ceremony.

## Hyderabad Firm Announces Cash Incentives for its Employees Switching to EVs



**HYDERABAD**

Hyderabad based AJA Consulting Services LLP Leads Green Workplace Movement with EV and Carpooling Incentives for the employees\*

Hyderabad- Extending support to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call to shift from petrol and diesel vehicles to eco-friendly mobility options, Hyderabad-based tech firm AJA Consulting Services LLP has announced incentives for its employees purchasing Electric Vehicles (EVs).

Announcing the initiative, Mr. Phaniraj Jaligama, Chief

Executive Officer of Aja Consulting Services LLP, said the company will provide a subsidy of Rs 10,000 for employees purchasing four-wheeler EVs and Rs 5,000 for those opting for two-wheeler EVs.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Phaniraj Jaligama said the Prime Minister recently urged citizens to adopt carpooling and switch to EVs in view of the ongoing Israel-Iran conflict, which has resulted in rising fuel prices and concerns over fuel shortages.

He noted that reducing fuel consumption would help the nation save valuable foreign

exchange reserves. "To encourage the adoption of EVs and support the Prime Minister's vision for sustainable transportation, we have introduced a Green Policy, also referred to as our EV Policy, for employees," he said.

The company stated that the initiative is aimed at promoting environmentally sustainable practices while encouraging employees to embrace clean and energy-efficient transportation solutions. Hyderabad-Based AJA Consulting Services LLP Leads Green Workplace Movement with EV and Carpooling Incentives

**SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
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Details of the Tender Notices of S.C. Railway can be seen on our website : [www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in)

**E-Tender Notice No. 13-2026 Dt. 19.05.2026**

Senior Divisional Engineer/Coordination/Guntakal acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tenders for the following works:

**Closing date & Time: 15.06.2026 at 15:00 hrs**

**S.No.: 1, Tender No.:** Engg-GTL-Central-2104, **Description of Work:** Guntakal Division-Kondapuram - Proposed laying of ballastless tracks at KDP (Road No.1 & 4). **Advertised Value in Rs:** 9,38,66,468.04 ps. **Earnest Money Deposit in Rs:** 18,77,329.36 ps

**S.No.:2, Tender No.:** Engg-GTL-North-2105, **Description of Work:** Guntakal Division: SW-I: KL-GTL (UP&DN) CTR(P) Complete Track Renewal (primary) of exg. 52kg/90UTS rail with new 60kg/R260 rail on PSC6 sleeper 1660 Nos./km including recoupment of ballast and deep screening for a length of 0.97km. SW-II: GY-WADI(UP&DN), KL-GTL (UP&DN); TFR(P) Through Rail Renewal (Primary) of exg. 60kg/52kg/90UTS rail with new 60kg/R260 rail on PSC6 sleeper for a length of 52.89km. SW-III: GY-WADI(UP&DN); TSR(P) Through Sleeper Renewal (Primary) of exg. PSC6 sleepers with new Wider sleeper 1660 Nos./km including recoupment of ballast and deep screening for a length of 6.90km. SW-IV: GY-WADI(UP&DN), KL-GTL(UP); TBR (BCM): Through Ballasting of track along with BCM deep screening by BCM for a total length of 68.27km. SW-V: GY-WADI (UP&DN), KL-GTL(UP); TFR (all fittings) on PSC6 sleeper track for a total length of 50.125km. SW-VI: GY-WADI(Yard): Development of PQRS depot involving Earth work, Extension of bridge work, Ballasting and Track linking. (Locations as per annexure). **Advertised Value in Rs:** 10,27,99,642.51 ps. **Earnest Money Deposit in Rs:** 20,56,000.00 ps

**S.No.:3, Tender No.:** Engg-GTL-North-2106, **Description of Work:** Guntakal Division: SW-I: GY-WADI(UP&DN); TFR(P) Through Rail Renewal(Primary) of exg. 60kg/52kg/90UTS rail with new 60kg/R260 rail on PSC6 sleeper for a length of 7.07km. SW-II: GY-WADI(UP&DN); TBR(BCM): Through Ballasting of track along with deep screening by BCM for a total length of 68.69km. SW-III: GY-WADI(UP&DN); TFR(all fittings) on PSC6 sleeper track for a total length of 134.090km. **Advertised Value in Rs:** 4,31,02,927.20 ps. **Earnest Money Deposit in Rs:** 8,62,100.00 ps

For Bid Document and other details login to <http://ireps.gov.in>. Any Corrigenda will be issued online only.

**Divisional Railway Manager/Works/Guntakal**

**E-Tender Notice No. 494/DRM/W/GNT Dt. 20.05.2026**

The undersigned invites e-tenders for the works mentioned below upto 15:30 hrs of 16.06.2026.

**S.No.: 1, Tender Id:** 2853, **Sr DEN Section:** West, **Description of work:** Zone GUNTUR - Kurichedu (including) and its premises for the period from 01.07.2026 to 30.06.2027. **Approx Value (Rs.):** 1,35,26,404/-, **EMD (Rs.):** 2,70,500/-

**S.No.: 2, Tender Id:** 2854, **Sr DEN Section:** West, **Description of work:** Zone REDDIPALEM - Guntur (Excluding Guntur station but including colonies) to New Guntur (Including New Guntur station and colony) for the period from 01.07.2026 to 30.06.2027. **Approx Value (Rs.):** 1,63,94,259/-, **EMD (Rs.):** 3,27,900/-

**S.No.: 3, Tender Id:** 2855, **Sr DEN Section:** West, **Description of work:** Zone NALLAPADU - Nallapadu Divisional office campus at Pattabhipuram for the period from 01.07.2026 to 30.06.2027. **Approx Value (Rs.):** 1,51,62,908/-, **EMD (Rs.):** 3,03,300/-

**S.No.: 4, Tender Id:** 2856, **Sr DEN Section:** West, **Description of work:** Zone Nandyal - Tarlupadu (excluding) to Nandyal (including) for the period from 01.07.2026 to 30.06.2027. **Approx Value (Rs.):** 1,10,44,964/-, **EMD (Rs.):** 2,20,900/-

**S.No.: 5, Tender Id:** 2857, **Sr DEN Section:** West, **Description of work:** Zone Markapur - Kurichedu (including) to Tarlupadu (including) for the period from 01.07.2026 to 30.06.2027. **Approx Value (Rs.):** 65,25,657/-, **EMD (Rs.):** 1,30,500/-

**S.No.: 6, Tender Id:** 2858, **Sr DEN Section:** North, **Description of work:** Zone NALLAPADU - Nallapadu Divisional office campus at Pattabhipuram for the period from 01.07.2026 to 30.06.2027. **Approx Value (Rs.):** 1,98,73,168/-, **EMD (Rs.):** 3,97,500/-

**S.No.: 7, Tender Id:** 2859, **Sr DEN Section:** North, **Description of work:** Zone Naigonda: Miryalaguda (excluding) to Pagidipalli (including) for the period from 01.07.2026 to 30.06.2027. **Approx Value (Rs.):** 1,45,93,419/-, **EMD (Rs.):** 2,91,900/-

**S.No.: 8, Tender Id:** 2860, **Sr DEN Section:** North, **Description of work:** Zone Nadikudi: Tummalacheruvu (excluding) to Macherla (including), Miryalaguda (including) to Nadikudi (including) and Vishnupuram (including) to Janpachad (including) for the period from 01.07.2026 to 30.06.2027. **Approx Value (Rs.):** 1,72,17,432/-, **EMD (Rs.):** 3,44,400/-

**S.No.: 9, Tender Id:** 2861, **Sr DEN Section:** North, **Description of work:** Zone Repalle & New Guntur: Guntur (excluding) to Tenali (excluding) to Repalle (including), Nallapadu (including) to Sathenapalli (excluding) for the period from 01.07.2026 to 30.06.2027. **Approx Value (Rs.):** 1,28,43,922/-, **EMD (Rs.):** 2,56,900/-

**S.No.: 10, Tender Id:** 2862, **Sr DEN Section:** North, **Description of work:** Zone Piduguralla: New Piduguralla (including) to Savayapuram (excluding), Sathenapalli (including) to Nadikudi (excluding) for the period from 01.07.2026 to 30.06.2027. **Approx Value (Rs.):** 1,17,72,332/-, **EMD (Rs.):** 2,35,500/-

1. Last date for online submission of E-bids is upto 15:30 hrs of 16.06.2026. For detailed information login to website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

2. Any further Communication/Corrigendum shall be intimated through e-portal [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in).

**Divisional Railway Manager (Works)/Guntur**

## Medak MP urges Centre to shield sunflower farmers from distress sales

**HYDERABAD**

BJP MP M. Raghunandan Rao met Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan during his visit to Hyderabad and appealed for enhanced procurement of Sunflower crop under the Minimum Support Price (MSP) / Price Support Scheme (PSS) for the Yasangi (Rabi) 2025-26 season in Telangana.

In a representation submitted to the Union Minister, the Medak MP highlighted that Sunflower cultivation in Telangana has increased significantly from 21,091 acres to 27,675 acres, pushing estimated production from 13,935 MTs to 19,373 MTs.

Raghunandan Rao pointed out that while the Telangana government had proposed procurement of 10,499 MTs, the Centre approved procurement of only 3,690 MTs through NAFED via TG MARKFED.

He said the approved quantity was inadequate considering the sharp rise in cultivation and production. The MP also expressed concern over the steep fall in market prices, stating that Sunflower is currently selling at around Rs.5,376 per quintal against the declared MSP of Rs.7,721 per quintal, leaving farmers in severe financial distress. He informed the Union Minister that a large number of farmers from Gajwel, Siddipet and Medak regions had cultivated Sunflower expecting remunerative prices, but are now facing uncertainty due to low market rates.

Seeking immediate intervention, Raghunandan Rao urged the Centre to enhance the procurement target from 3,690 MTs to 10,839 MTs — nearly 75 per cent of the estimated production — to prevent distress sales and safeguard the interests of small and marginal farmers in Telangana. (NSS)

## Centre cracks down on alleged ecological damage near KBR Park

**HYDERABAD**

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has reportedly directed the Telangana Forest department to take immediate action over alleged environmental destruction in the Chiran Kunta-KBR region of Hyderabad. The move follows a complaint by rights lawyer Rama Rao Immaneni, who alleged large-scale ecological damage within the HIC project limits. The Centre has sought an action taken report and instructed officials to share it with the complainant. Calling Chiran Kunta a heritage symbol linked to the Nizam era, Immaneni stressed the need to protect the biodiversity surrounding Kasu Brahmananda Reddy National Park, home to dozens of fauna and flora species. He also demanded that KBR Park be renamed "Prince Mukarram Jah Park" to honour Hyderabad's heritage legacy.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY					
PALAKKAD DIVISION					
Sr. Divisional Engineer / Co-ordination / Southern Railway / Palakkad invites E - TENDERS for the following works.					
E - TENDER NOTICE No. PGT/07/10/2026 dated 19/05/2026					
Sl No	Name of work	Approximate Cash value in (₹) lakhs	Bid Security Amount (₹)	Tender closing date on 15.00 hrs	Completion Period in Months
1	Divisional Engineer / East Jurisdiction - Proposed Standardization of Level Crossing - 30 LCs & overhauling of LCs for a period of Two years.	955.06	19,10,100/-	18/06/2026	Twenty Four
2	Palakkad division-Provision of new standard height gauge at Limited Use Subways / Road under bridges (16 nos).	200.63	4,01,300/-	18/06/2026	Twelve
3	Construction of boundary wall (15.90 km) at various station yards & colony in Palakkad Division.	1615.63	32,31,300/-	18/06/2026	Twenty Four
4	Palakkad division - Yard improvement works : Walayar : Proposed TTR for forced layout correction for P&C No. 58A, 58 B and Trap No. 108 with new 1 in 16, 1 in 8.5 and trap in order to reduce the turnover curvature from 8 degree to 6 degree.	96.86	1,93,700/-	18/06/2026	Eighteen
5	Palakkad - Augmentation of Officers Rest House (ORH) Bhairavi at Palakkad.	77.34	1,54,700/-	10/06/2026	Ten
6	Improvements to power supply arrangements by provision of SMPS based IPS with Building at CLMD station of Palakkad division; Provision of SMPS based IPS with Building at Chullimada (CLMD) station of Palakkad division based on Drg No. DYCEENMAQ/08-2024	50.86	1,01,700/-	10/06/2026	Six

1. All the contracts on Works / goods / services will be subject to the new GST Act as applicable from date to time.  
2. Contractors / Suppliers have to register themselves with GST authorities and to furnish the GST registration number in order to process the bills from 01.7.2017 onwards.  
3. For complete details of the above tenders please visit Web site "http://www.ireps.gov.in".  
Note: It is the responsibility of the Tenderer to check any corrigendum issued for any correction or modifications uploaded subsequently in website; the same shall be taken in to account while submitting Tender.

**Sr. Divisional Engineer / Co-ord / Southern Railway / Palakkad**  
(For and on behalf of the President of India)

SOUTHERN RAILWAY	
Salem Division	
Office of the Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer Electric Loco Shed, Erode	
E-Tender Notice	
Online tender is invited for the following work:	
Tender No	Description of Work
SA_A_RS_ED_OT_26_27_8, Dt.19-05-2026	Works contract for Modification works for installing MPCSS Version 3 in electric locomotives available at Electric Loco Shed, Southern Railway, Salem Division, Erode.
SA_A_RS_ED_OT_26_27_9, Dt.19-05-2026	Repair / Reconditioning / Overhauling of M/s.ELGI make 1750 LPM Oil lubricated compressor (Model No. RR20100 CG (M)) of electric locomotives available at Electric Loco Shed, Southern Railway, Salem Division, Erode.
All details regarding the tender are available at <a href="https://www.ireps.gov.in">https://www.ireps.gov.in</a>	
<b>DEE/RS/ED For Sr.DEE/RS/ED</b>	

SOUTHERN RAILWAY	
Construction Organization, Ernakulam Jn	
<b>1.TENDER NOTICE No. 07-CE-CN-ERS-2026-OT Dated 15.05.2026</b> <b>Name of work:</b> Manual linking of track, assembling and insertion of points & crossings, supply and dumping of ballast, transportation of PWay materials, welding of track, modification of track etc. for Mangalore Junction stage II & Final. <b>Tender Value :</b> Rs.645.07 Lakhs, <b>Bid Security:</b> Rs.1290200/-, <b>Completion Period :</b> 6 Months <b>Date &amp; time of tender closing : 08.06.2026 15.00 hrs</b>	
<b>2.TENDER NOTICE No. 10-CE-CN-ERS-2026-OT Dated 16.05.2026</b> <b>Name of work:</b> Shoranur-Mangaluru section: (1) Proposed re-construction of Br. No. 829 (2), Br. No. 904 (proposed UP line) (3) Br. No. 1085 (proposed DN line) (4) Br. No. 1177 (proposed DN line) & (5) Br. No. 1188 (proposed DN line) other miscellaneous works in Palakkad Division <b>Tender Value:</b> Rs.9301.70 Lakhs, <b>Bid Security:</b> Rs. 1,86,03,400/- <b>Completion Period :</b> 18 Months <b>Date &amp; time of tender closing : 17.06.2026 15.00 hrs</b>	
<b>3.TENDER NOTICE No. 11-CE-CN-ERS-2026-OT Dated 16.05.2026</b> <b>Name of work:</b> Shoranur-Mangaluru section: (1) Proposed re-construction of Br. No. 1138 (2), Br. No. 1149 (proposed UP line) (3) Br. No. 1159 (proposed DN line) (4) Br. No. 1169 (proposed DN line) & (5) Br.No.1254 (proposed DN line) other miscellaneous works in Palakkad Division <b>Tender Value:</b> Rs. 9686.90 Lakhs, <b>Bid Security:</b> Rs. 1,93,73,800/- <b>Completion Period :</b> 18 Months <b>Date &amp; time of tender closing : 17.06.2026 15.00 hr</b>	
Complete details and tender document will be available at <a href="https://www.ireps.gov.in">https://www.ireps.gov.in</a>	
<b>Chief Engineer / Construction Ernakulam Jn</b>	

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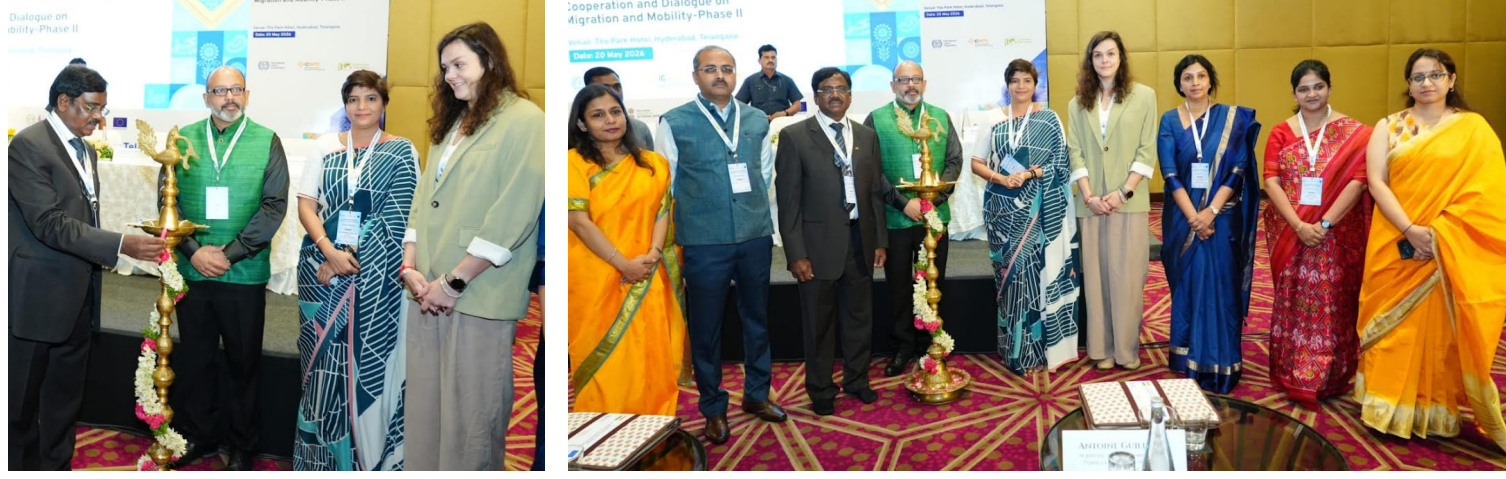
### APCM Naidu offers Srivari sare to Goddess Gangamma during annual Jatara

**KUPPAM:** Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday presented the traditional TTD Srivari Sare to Goddess Prasanna Tirupati Gangamma during the grand annual jatara celebrations at Kuppam in Chittoor district. The Chief Minister, accompanied by his spouse Bhuvaneshwari, offered special prayers at the temple and sought the blessings of the Goddess for the prosperity, peace and well-being of the people of AP. The couple also participated in the rare and



sacred Viswaroopa Darshan of the deity. Thousands of devotees gathered at the temple to witness the once-a-year Viswaroopa Darshan, creating a spiritually vibrant atmosphere throughout the temple premises. TTD Additional EO C.H. Venkaiah Chowdary, Board Member Shantaram, Deputy EO Lokanatham, priests and temple officials were present during the celebrations.

## Telangana partners with EU to create safe, legal overseas job pathways: Vivek



### HYDERABAD

The State government is committed to creating international employment opportunities for the youth of the Telangana, said Minister for Labour, Employment, Mines and Geology G. Vivek Venkatswamy.

He stated that the government is taking special measures to further strengthen TOMCOM and has allocated ₹90 crore in the budget for this purpose.

The Minister was speaking as the chief guest at the state-level workshop on India-European Union Mobility Project by the Ministry of External Affairs and the European Union, in collaboration with TOMCOM.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister said Europe currently offers vast employment opportunities, while India has a large pool of talented and trainable youth.

He said this creates a mutually beneficial partnership, with India preparing skilled manpower and



European countries seeking professionally trained workers. Recognising this opportunity early, the Telangana government initiated focused efforts to prepare youth for global careers, he said.

The Minister said TOMCOM has emerged as a key institution in guiding and training young professionals for overseas employment. Many candidates trained through TOMCOM are already working abroad successfully.

He particularly highlighted the growing demand in European countries for candidates trained in foreign languages, especially German.

Vivek Venkatswamy stated that the government is also creating awareness among youth about the risks associated with illegal or unverified migration channels and is encouraging them to choose safe, legal and structured pathways for overseas employment.

To meet the evolving requirements

of domestic and international job markets, especially in Europe, the Telangana government has established several Advanced Technology Centres (ATCs) across the state to provide industry-oriented and globally relevant training, he said.

Referring to the rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence, the Minister observed that traditional job roles are changing rapidly, making skill upgradation and technological adaptability essential. He stressed that youth trained in line with future industry requirements would be better positioned to seize international opportunities.

Vivek Venkatswamy said the workshop is helping create awareness among Telangana youth regarding higher education, skill development and employment prospects in European countries.

The event was attended by Ministry of External Affairs Under Secretary Adarsh Kumar Mehra, LETF Secretary D. Harichandana, Director of Employment and Training Kanthi Wesley, Regional Passport Officer J. Sneha, ICWA Joint Secretary Abhijit Chakraborty and other dignitaries.

## Congress leader questioned by SIT in phone tapping case

### HYDERABAD

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Wednesday questioned Congress leader and Gaddiannaram Market Committee Chairman Madhusudan Reddy in connection with the alleged phone tapping case linked to the 2023 Telangana Assembly elections.

According to officials, the SIT recorded Madhusudan Reddy's statement after identifying that his phone had allegedly tapped during the election period. He was summoned as part of the ongoing investigation into the high-profile surveillance case.

Speaking to the media after the questioning, Madhusudan Reddy said the SIT officials informed him that his phone was indeed tapped during the 2023 Assembly elections and that he had cooperated fully with the investigation by answering all questions posed by the officials.

He further claimed that the SIT indicated the alleged tapping operation was carried out under the supervision of former intelligence chief T. Prabhakar



Rao and that the investigators had shown evidence related to the surveillance.

Describing phone tapping as "one of the gravest crimes in the country", Madhusudan alleged that several Congress leaders were targeted during the election campaign. He expressed shock over the revelations and launched a sharp attack on former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, accusing him of misusing power for political gains.

Madhusudan also alleged that BRS leader K. T. Rama Rao had even orchestrated surveillance on members within his own family. He warned that those involved in the alleged phone tapping conspiracy would soon face legal consequences and imprisonment.

## 2025 batch trainee IAS officers meet Revanth

### HYDERABAD

The 2025 batch trainee IAS officers met Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy at the Bodhi Pavilion of MCRHRD Institute on Wednesday.

MCRHRD Vice Chairman Shanti Kumari and Course Di-

rector Kandukuri Usha Rani were also present. The trainee IAS officers who had a meeting with the Chief Minister include Ettaboyina Sai Shivani, Sachin Basavaraj Guttoor, Potharaju Hari Prasad, Paras Kumar, P. Suresh, and Nelatooru Srikanth Reddy. (NSS)

## India Stone & Tech Expo 2026 to showcase global stone industry innovations in HYD

### HYDERABAD

The three-day India Stone & Tech Expo 2026, a major trade exhibition dedicated to the stone, machinery and surface technology sectors, will be held from May 29 to 31 here at the HITEX Exhibition Centre.

Positioned as South India's leading stone industry trade show, the expo aims to bring together the entire stone ecosystem under one roof, including raw material producers, stone processors, machinery manufacturers, tooling companies and finished-surface brands.

The event holds special significance for Telangana, as the two Telugu states together represent India's largest natural stone belt. Nearly 80 percent of Telangana's granite production is export-oriented, underlining the state's strong global market presence.

Organised by Incentive Media, the expo will feature advanced stone-processing technologies, cutting and polishing machinery, CNC solutions, abrasives, adhesives, chemicals and processing consumables.

The exhibition will also spotlight India's rich stone craftsmanship



traditions through live participation by sculptors, idol makers, artisans, and custom stone creators, blending traditional artistry with modern industrial innovation.

Leading exhibitors confirmed for the event include SRAI Granite, Shri Bhagwati Machines Pvt. Ltd., Granite India (Wanlong), FIGSI, Concord Gears & Motors, Diabu Diamond Tools, Fusion CNC Techsystems LLP, Technoline Machines,

Sigma Machine Tools, Stone Plus and SVG International, along with several international participants from China.

With Hyderabad emerging as a key hub for construction, infrastructure, real estate and MICE activities, the organisers expect the expo to attract architects, developers, builders, fabricators, buyers and decision-makers from across India.

## Slum residents living in 'hell', Cong ignoring civic crisis: MLC Sravan

### HYDERABAD

BRS MLC Sravan Dasoju launched a sharp attack on the Congress government, alleging that slum dwellers in the prestigious Khairatabad constituency are being forced to live in "inhuman conditions" due to the collapse of basic civic infrastructure.

During a field visit to Sriram Nagar and Ambedkar Nagar slums in Banjara Hills Road No. 12 on Wednesday, Sravan Dasoju accused the State government of neglecting the poor while focusing on publicity campaigns and real estate interests.

The visit was organised by local Banjara Hills division leaders Jejolla Raju Mudiraj, Md. Akhtar, Ramesh, Basva Goud, Ramulu and Sashikala, where the residents reportedly complained of severe drinking water shortages, sewage contamination, damaged roads and stalled drainage works.

Targeting Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, the BRS leader alleged that despite handling the Municipal



Administration portfolio, the Chief Minister was "more interested in real estate ventures under the guise of 'Future City' than solving civic problems faced by ordinary citizens." He also criticised Khairatabad MLA Danam Nagender, claiming the legislator was "preoccupied with fears over his political future" and had failed to address public grievances.

Highlighting the condition of the slums, Sravan Dasoju said drainage and nala works near Mohammeda Masjid had remained incomplete

for months due to non-payment of contractor bills, leaving roads dug up and dangerous for commuters.

Residents of Ambedkar Nagar also complained that drinking water supply, which they claimed was once available round the clock during the BRS regime, had now been reduced to once every two or three days for barely 15 minutes. They further alleged that sewage water was mixing with drinking water pipelines, posing serious health risks.

Questioning the government's "Telangana Rising" campaign, the MLC said the reality on the ground was one of overflowing sewage, battered roads and unsafe open drains.

Sravan said he had raised the issue with GHMC Commissioner Ilambarthi L. Karnan and zonal officials, demanding immediate intervention. Issuing a stern warning, he said that if authorities failed to resolve the problems immediately, the BRS would launch a large-scale public agitation and lay siege to the GHMC head office. (NSS)

## KTR behind rumours against me, says Union Minister Bandi Sanjay

### HYDERABAD

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Wednesday strongly denied reports claiming that he was planning to float a separate political party after quitting the BJP.

Addressing the media at the BJP state headquarters in Hyderabad, Bandi Sanjay asserted that he would remain committed to the BJP throughout his life. "If you ask any committed BJP activist about their last wish, they would say they want the saffron flag draped over their mortal remains. That is my wish too",



he remarked. Dismissing speculation over his alleged removal from the Union Cabinet, Bandi Sanjay accused K.T. Rama Rao for orchestrating a misinfor-

mation campaign against him through select media outlets. He alleged that certain television channels and digital platforms were spreading fabricated stories

at the behest of BRS leadership following the BJP's role in ending the decade-long rule of the BRS government in Telangana.

The Union Minister claimed that his political opponents were frustrated over the fall of the BRS regime and were now attempting to malign him politically. He also alleged that some leaders wanted him arrested for challenging the "corruption and feudal politics" of the previous government. Several BJP leaders, including MLA Rakesh Reddy, MLC Anji Reddy and party spokesperson N. V. Subhash, were also present.

## Telangana seeks additional Rs.5,000 Cr special capital assistance from Centre

### HYDERABAD

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka requested Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman that an additional special financial assistance of ₹5,000 crore be sanctioned to the State of Telangana under the "Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI)".

On behalf of the Telangana government, he expressed his gratitude for the assistance being provided to the states—in the form of 50-year interest-free loans—through this scheme implemented by the Central Government.

Citing the fact that Rs 4,208 crore has already been sanctioned to Telangana for the 2025-26 financial year, he explained that further financial support is required for the ongoing development initiatives and welfare schemes in the state.

Bhatti Vikramarka, along with Principal Secretary for Finance Sandeep Kumar Sultania and Secretary of the Planning department Dr. Gaurav Uppal, called on Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi on Wednesday.

He discussed several key issues concerning the state's development, massive investments being undertaken in the education sector, capital expenditure, and the expansion of infrastructure.

On the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister stated that while Telangana is rapidly developing as one of the country's newly



formed states, the burden of debt incurred through Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) between 2014 and 2023—along with the associated repayment obligations—has placed increased pressure on the state's economy.

Nevertheless, he noted that the Telangana government continues to make substantial investments in the sectors of education, health-care, rural infrastructure, and human resource development.

Bhatti Vikramarka explained to the Union Finance Minister that the Telangana government is committed to providing world-class education to students across the state, specifically through the Young India Integrated Residential Schools (YIIRS).

Similarly, another memorandum was submitted to the Union Fi-

nance Minister regarding the massive investments being undertaken by the Telangana government in the education sector.

It was explained that the State government has formulated an investment plan totalling ₹30,000 crore for the transformation of the education sector; this includes the construction of 105 'Young India' Integrated Residential School campuses at a cost of ₹21,000 crore, and the development of government junior colleges, degree colleges, technical educational institutions, and digital infrastructure using the remaining ₹9,000 crore.

In this context, Bhatti Vikramarka expressed his gratitude to the Central government for the approval granted by the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) to the

'Young India Integrated Residential Schools Project'—undertaken with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) at a cost of ₹4,049.11 crore—and the 'Telangana Education Infrastructure Upgradation Mission Project'—undertaken with the assistance of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) at a cost of ₹4,903.44 crore.

The Deputy Chief Minister requested that the loans associated with these two projects be exempted from the State's FRBM limits.

He stated that these are not ordinary expenditures, but rather long-term capital investments that contribute to the human resource development of future generations, specifically, to the educational empowerment of SC, ST, BC, and minority communities.

## AP to Launch India's Largest MSME Energy and Water Efficiency Programme

VIJAYAWADA, MAY 20

Andhra Pradesh is preparing to launch one of India's largest Energy and Water Efficiency Programmes for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), with the aim of promoting sustainable industrial growth, advanced technology adoption and resource-efficient manufacturing practices across the State. The ambitious initiative is being implemented in partnership with Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), functioning under the Union Ministry of Power. Officials said the programme is expected to become a national model for improving industrial competitiveness, reducing operational costs, generating green employment and strengthening environmental sustainability. The initiative is aligned with the Government of India's Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) Programme as well as Andhra Pradesh's MSME and Entrepreneur Development Policy.

As part of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's vision for sustainable and globally competitive MSMEs, the State Industries Department will organise the "MSME Growth Conclave" on May 25 at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Kala Vedika in Vijayawada.

Dr. N. Yuva Raj, Secretary of Industries, Commerce and Food Processing Department, said the conclave will bring together stakeholders from across the MSME ecosystem and highlight major initiatives aimed at strengthening MSME competitiveness, sustainability, technology adoption and market readiness.

The conclave is expected to be attended by the Chief Minister as chief guest, along with Industries and MSME Minister Kondapalli Srinivas, senior officials and industry representatives. Expert sessions, partnerships with national and global organisations, facilitation services and interactions with institutions supporting entrepreneurship will also be organised during the event. Ahead of the conclave, Dr. Yuva Raj conducted a review meeting with MSME Development Corporation officials and EESL representatives, directing them to create awareness among MSME stakeholders about the long-term benefits of adopting energy-efficient and water-efficient technologies.

A major highlight of the conclave will be the formal launch of the Energy and Water Efficiency Intervention Programme for MSMEs. The State Government had earlier signed a Memorandum of Understanding



with EESL during the CII Partnership Summit 2025 to undertake structured interventions focused on resource efficiency, sustainable manufacturing and technology upgradation. Under the programme, comprehensive energy and water audits will be conducted in MSME units across Andhra Pradesh. Cluster-specific Energy Intensity Indicators will be developed to benchmark enterprises engaged in similar industrial activities and identify high-energy-consuming units that require priority intervention. Participating MSMEs will also be geo-tagged and GIS-based mapping will be used to identify energy intensity hotspots within industrial clusters.

The audits and studies are expected to identify energy losses, excessive water consumption, utility inefficiencies, process optimisation opportunities and equipment retrofiting needs. Based on the findings, Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) will be prepared recommending energy-efficient machinery, utility management systems, water recycling solutions and sustainable production methods. To

encourage adoption of modern technologies, MSMEs implementing technology upgradation measures will be eligible for subsidies of up to 25 percent under the MSME & Entrepreneur Development Policy 4.0 (MEDP 4.0).

Andhra Pradesh currently has more than 21 lakh MSMEs, which form the backbone of the State's industrial ecosystem. The sector contributes significantly to employment generation, regional development and Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).

The manufacturing segment alone accounts for nearly 24 percent of the MSME sector, comprising around five lakh units engaged in agro-based industries, textiles, apparel manufacturing, dairy, food processing and other sectors. Nearly 45 percent of these enterprises are led by women entrepreneurs, reflecting the inclusive nature of the State's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Officials said the MSME credit ecosystem has also recorded substantial growth, with institutional credit flow crossing ₹1.17 lakh crore during 2025-26. Under the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), Andhra Pradesh established 6,193 enterprises, generating employment for over 68,000 people

with margin money assistance of ₹205.95 crore, making the State the best performer among southern States. The Government has also launched the AP Chief Minister's Entrepreneurship Programme (AP-CMEP), a ₹300 crore credit-linked subsidy scheme aimed at supporting 3,500 MSMEs and creating nearly 17,000 jobs in manufacturing and knowledge economy sectors. In addition, under the PM Vishwakarma scheme, over 25,000 loans worth ₹179 crore were disbursed during 2025-26, helping Andhra Pradesh secure fifth place nationally. The State Government is also developing 175 MSME Parks, with more than 700 units allotted nearly 202 acres involving proposed investments exceeding ₹1,000 crore. The initiative is expected to create employment for over 21,000 people. Further, under the AP Cluster Development Programme, launched with a ₹200 crore outlay, the Government plans to develop 45 MSME clusters by 2030, benefiting over 1,600 MSMEs and generating more than 7,000 jobs. The State has also focused on improving export opportunities through Reverse Buyer-Seller Meets involving buyers from 25 countries, generating over 400 export leads and opening new global market opportunities for Andhra Pradesh MSMEs.

## Congress's 59-year exile in Tamil Nadu ends, two MLAs to join Vijay Cabinet

Congress MLAs Rajesh Kumar and P Vishwanathan will join Chief Minister Vijay's cabinet on Thursday. Their induction brings the party into a Tamil Nadu government for the first time in 59 years.



Ending the exile of 59 years, the Congress party is set to join the Tamil Nadu Cabinet as two of its MLAs are set to take oath as ministers in the CM Vijay-led government on Thursday. AICC general secretary (organisation) KC Venugopal announced on Wednesday that Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge approved the induction of Congress MLAs Rajesh Kumar and P Vishwanathan into the Tamil Nadu cabinet led by Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay. "INC President Mallikarjun Kharge has approved the induction of INC MLAs Adv Rajesh Kumar and Thiru P Vishwanathan into the Tamil Nadu cabinet led by CM Thiru Vijay, and they will be taking oath as Ministers tomorrow," Venugopal said in a post on X. Calling it a "historic occasion", Venugopal said the Congress was joining the Tamil Nadu cabinet after a long gap of 59 years. "I convey my best wishes to them, we are confident that they will deliver on the hopes and aspirations of the people of Tamil Nadu, and will

work to realise the bold vision of welfare and pro-people governance laid down by LoP Rahul Gandhi ji," he added. From 1952 to 1967, the Congress ruled Tamil Nadu, then known as Madras state, under chief ministers C Rajagopalachari, K Kamaraj and M Bhaktavatsalam. The first provincial election after Independence took place in 1952. However, after the DMK came to power in 1967, the Congress remained out of the Tamil Nadu government despite aligning at different times with both the DMK and the AIADMK. Between 1967 and 2026, the party never became part of the state government. During the 2006-11 DMK regime, the Congress unsuccessfully sought a share in power. The Congress currently has five MLAs in the Tamil Nadu Assembly after contesting the recently concluded Assembly elections in alliance with the DMK. However, the Congress walked out of the DMK-led alliance following the election results declared on May 4 and extended support to actor-turned-politician C Joseph Vijay's TVK government.

## Tambaram-Bodinayakkanur Special Trains for Summer Rush

CHENNAI, MAY 20:

To clear the extra passenger rush during the summer season, Southern Railway has announced special express train services between Tambaram and Bodinayakkanur.

According to railway officials, Train No. 06059 Tambaram-Bodinayakkanur Express Special will depart from Tambaram at 10.30 pm on May 23 and 30, and June 6 and 13 (Saturdays). The train will reach Bodinayakkanur at 11.15 am the following day.

In the return direction, Train No. 06060 Bodinayakkanur-Tambaram Express Special will leave Bodinayakkanur at 4.45 pm on May 24 and 31, and June 7 and 14 (Sundays), arriving at Tambaram at 6.30 am the next day. The special trains will consist of 3 AC Two-Tier coaches, 1 AC Three-Tier coach, 12 Sleeper Class coaches, 3 General Second Class coaches and 2 Divyangjan-friendly Second Class coaches. The trains will stop at major stations including Chengalpattu, Villupuram, Chidambaram, Mayiladuthurai, Thiruvavur, Thanjavur, Tiruchirappalli, Dindigul, Madurai, Usilampatti, Andipatti and Teni.

## Kerala cabinet portfolios out: CM Satheesan keeps Finance, Chennithala gets Home

Kerala Chief Minister V D Satheesan retained the Finance and Law portfolios along with several key departments after Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar approved the portfolio allocation of the newly sworn-in UDF government.

Kerala Chief Minister VD Satheesan retained the Finance and Law portfolios along with several key departments after Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar approved the portfolio recommendations of the newly sworn-in UDF government on Wednesday. According to the portfolio allocation, Satheesan will also handle Kerala Financial Corporation, Ports, Pollution Control, Airports, Metro Rail and Railways. In addition, the Chief Minister will over-



see all important policy matters and subjects not specifically allocated to any other department. Senior Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala received the Home portfolio along with Vigilance, Fire and Rescue Services, Prisons and Coir. KPCC chief Sunny Joseph was assigned Electricity, Environment, Parliamentary Affairs and ANERT. Senior Congress leader K Muralidharan took charge of Health, Medical Education, Medical University, Ayush, Drugs Control and Devaswoms.

and Additional Skill Acquisition Programme (ASAP) Kerala. T Siddique received Agriculture, Soil Survey and Soil Conservation, Kerala Agricultural University and Warehousing Corporation. K A Thulasi was given charge of Development of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes. Bindhu Krishna will oversee Labour, Animal Husbandry, Milk Co-operatives and Woman and Child Development. O J Jaaneesh received Sports, Youth Affairs, Zoos and Museum. IUML leader PK Kunhalikutty was assigned the Industries and Commerce, Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence portfolios. N Samsudheen will head General Education, Wakf and Haj Pilgrimage and Minority Welfare. KM Shaji received Panchayat and Rural Development, while PK Basheer was allotted the Public Works Department. VE Abdul

Gafoor was assigned Fisheries, Harbour Engineering and Social Justice. Mons Joseph will oversee Irrigation, while Anoop Jacob received Food and Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Legal Metrology. Revolutionary Socialist Party MLA Shibu Baby John was allotted Forests and Wildlife Protection, and CMPKSC MLA CP John received Road Transport, Motor Vehicles and Water Transport. The portfolio details were circulated through a gazette notification after the Governor approved the Chief Minister's recommendations. The UDF ministers had taken oath on May 18.

Addressing a press conference earlier, Satheesan rejected reports of any delay in finalising the portfolios. He said all disagreements regarding the allocation of departments were resolved by Monday night itself after the swearing-in ceremony.

## AP Leaders Pay Tribute to Prakasam Pantulu

AMARAVATI, MAY 20

Andhra Pradesh Governor AS. Abdul Nazeer and Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday paid tributes to Tanguturi Prakasam Pantulu, who served as the premier of the Madras Presidency and the first Chief Minister of Andhra State, on his death anniversary. The Governor said Prakasam Pantulu was a

fearless freedom fighter, visionary leader, and a symbol of courage and integrity. Popularly known as "Andhra Kesari," he dedicated his life to the service of the nation and the welfare of the people. His sacrifices, patriotism, and commitment towards democratic values continue to inspire future generations, Governor Abdul Nazeer said. Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu also paid tributes

to Prakasam Pantulu. "Tanguturi Prakasam Pantulu Garu was a symbol of the courage, adventures, and self-respect of the Telugu people. He was a great soul who lived solely for the people with unwavering patriotism, honesty, and dedication. On the occasion of Prakasam Pantulu Garu's death anniversary, let us remember the services of that noble leader," Chandrababu Naidu said. Former

chief minister and YSR Congress Party president Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy paid floral tributes by garlanding the portrait of Prakasam Pantulu at the party's central office at Tadepalli. "A symbol of courage, an alter ego of integrity, and an immortal emblem of public service, the great leader Andhra Kesari Tanguturi Prakasam Pantulu Garu. He was a valiant hero who stood unflinchingly against

the oppression of British rulers, offering his chest to their bullets without fear. The path he treaded for the rights of the people and the upliftment of society remains an eternal source of inspiration for today's generations. On the occasion of Tanguturi Prakasam Pantulu Garu's birth anniversary today, we remember his services and pay our homage," Jagan Mohan Reddy said in a post on X.

## Arunachal Kiwi Mission Gets Global Push

NEW DELHI, MAY 20

Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region and Communications Jyotiraditya M. Scindia launched the ambitious Mission "Arunachal Kiwi: The USP of Arunachal Pradesh," aimed at transforming Arunachal Pradesh into India's leading premium organic kiwi-producing State with strong domestic and international market presence. The mission was launched in the presence of Pema Khandu, Chief Secretary Manish Kumar Gupta, MDoNER Secretary Sanjay Jaju and senior officials from the Centre and the State Government.

With an outlay of nearly ₹167 crore, the mission has been designed using a convergence-based, whole-of-government approach involving the Ministry of Development of

North Eastern Region (MDoNER), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Food Processing Industries, NABARD, ICAR-CITH, APEDA, NERAMAC and private investors.

Officials said the mission focuses on strengthening the entire kiwi value chain, from cultivation and post-harvest management to branding, exports and agri-tourism. The initiative adopts a cluster-based development model with six integrated Post-Harvest Management Hubs identified across major kiwi-growing regions including Ziro Valley in Lower Subansiri district, Dirang and Kalaktang in West Kameng district, Shi Yomi and Dibang Valley. More than 30 strategic interventions have been planned under the mission to address gaps in the kiwi ecosystem.



These include restoring Arunachal Pradesh's lapsed NPOP organic certification, improving cold-chain infrastructure, reducing distress sales, strengthening Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), promoting value addition and increasing market access for farmers. Speaking at the launch, Scindia highlighted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of ensuring that farmers become

stakeholders across the entire agricultural value chain "from farm to fork." The Minister said the Centre has identified one unique product from each northeastern State under the "Brand North East" initiative. He cited Mizoram's ginger, Nagaland's coffee, Meghalaya's Lakadong turmeric, Assam's muga silk and Tripura's Queen Pineapple as examples of products being promoted globally.

"With the launch of Project Kiwi in Arunachal Pradesh, we are taking another important step in building globally competitive value chains rooted in the strengths of the North East," he said. Scindia described the mission as a first-of-its-kind collaborative model bringing together Central and State Governments, financial institutions, research organisations and private players to strengthen the kiwi economy. The Minister noted that Arunachal Pradesh contributes more than 50 percent of India's kiwi production with annual output exceeding 7,050 metric tonnes. However, farmers continue to receive low returns due to lack of infrastructure and market access. Grade C kiwi often fetches only ₹20-40 per kg, while Grade A kiwi receives around ₹120 per kg despite imported kiwi commanding much

BHUBANESWAR, MAY 20

The Odisha Cabinet on Wednesday approved 10 key proposals related to seven departments including the Law, Energy and Fisheries and Animal Resources Development departments. The proposals were approved during the important meeting of the cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Mahi here on Wednesday. Among the major proposals approved by the Odisha Cabinet on Wednesday was the enactment of the Odisha Marine Fishing (Prohibition and Regulation) legislation, 2026 (OMFRA, 2026), repealing the existing Odisha Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1982, to establish a robust, modern, and inclusive legal framework for the Marine Fisheries Sector.

Calling marine fishing as an important part of the growth story of Odisha, Speaking to media persons, Chief Secretary Anu Garg said, "Chief Minister has announced in the budget

that there will be a deep sea fishing mission and a shrimp export mission, and therefore it was very important to enact this legislation, whereby emphasis will be laid on marine resource conservation, coastal security, and ensuring that seaweed development and mariculture, which hitherto were not included, will also be introduced. We are hopeful that this will give a boost to the marine economy."

The government hopes that the Odisha Marine Fishing Regulation Bill, 2026, will boost the state's marine fisheries sector and help achieve the target of Rs 25,000 crore in seafood exports by 2036, in line with the "Viksit Odisha Vision 2036-47" and the state's Blue Economy initiatives. The Odisha cabinet also gave its nod to the proposal of the Law department for the repealing of 358 Acts enacted during the year 1974 to 2025, which had become redundant and obsolete.

EDITORIAL

DEADLY CONVECTIVE STORMS:  
ASSESSING RISK, WARNING EFFICIENCY,  
AND STRUCTURAL VULNERABILITIES IN  
UTTAR PRADESH

Last week, a fast-moving, pre-monsoon weather system violently swept into Uttar Pradesh, unleashing a destructive combination of thunderstorms, severe dust storms, lightning, torrential rain, and intense thundersqualls across numerous districts simultaneously. By May 14, the official casualties had climbed to 111 fatalities and 72 injuries spanning 26 districts, categorizing these storms as one of the deadliest weather-related catastrophes experienced by Uttar Pradesh in recent memory. While the State has routinely encountered comparable weather events during the May-June period since at least 2018, if not earlier, the primary differentiator this year was the extreme intensity of the winds, which were powerful enough to tear mature trees from the ground. This specific storm was propelled by a volatile pre-monsoon convective system, which was further destabilized by the arrival of a fresh western disturbance over the northwestern region. Ahead of the disaster, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) had correctly broadcasted thunderstorm and lightning alerts, and the Uttar Pradesh government reportedly dispatched over 34 crore red and orange warning messages through its SACHET portal. Nevertheless, serious doubts remain regarding whether these digital alerts possessed adequate geographical precision, if they actually reached the targeted beneficiaries before the storm struck, and whether they merely flagged incoming bad weather instead of providing actionable safety instructions for residents to follow. The Meteorological Reality: The underlying meteorological risks in Uttar Pradesh are highly predictable due to seasonal atmospheric convergence, yet high structural vulnerability continuously translates these forecastable weather events into human tragedies. Proactive, advance preparation remains absolutely essential for two fundamental reasons. First, the State frequently functions as a atmospheric convergence zone where scorching, dry 'loo' winds moving eastward from the Thar Desert collide directly with moisture-heavy air masses pushing in from the Bay of Bengal to the southeast. Second, as these contrasting air masses encounter the rolling topography of the Vindhya hills in Mirzapur and Sonbhadra, they can be forced to lift rapidly, triggering severe, localized thunderstorms across specific sectors of the State. Consequently, even though local authorities could not have pinpointed the exact pinpoint intensity of the micro-storms, the broader regional threat was entirely foreseeable. The predictable recurrence of these systems at this exact time of year demands critical scrutiny into why the human death toll remains so devastatingly high. A significant portion of the explanation undoubtedly lies in the immediate structural causes of damage, particularly concerning public infrastructure and residential housing. Uttar Pradesh is home to a massive population living in structurally fragile rural and peri-urban dwellings; when a severe storm hits during dusk or overnight hours, residents are usually indoors, sheltered only by weak, collapsible roofs. Furthermore, citizens face extreme hazards from poorly anchored commercial billboards, exposed electrical wiring, and inadequately secured public signage. The State government was clearly aware of these specific structural and agricultural threats, as evidenced by its rollout of tailored financial relief packages categorized by farming type, crop variety, and nature of the loss. Ultimately, while the foundational environmental risk was entirely anticipated, systemic societal vulnerability remained dangerously high.

# Terrorism Taking New Forms and Continuing to Pose Challenges

The world is changing at a rapid pace. Every day brings new innovations. Technology has become an integral part of human life. Things that once seemed unimaginable have now become normal. Distances between nations have shrunk. The world has become so interconnected that an event in one corner can affect the lives of people in another. The internet, artificial intelligence, and digital communication systems have accelerated human life even further. These changes have brought not only opportunities but also challenges. Because every development has two sides. While on one hand it drives human progress, on the other hand the same systems can also be used

changed. Over different periods, terrorism has taken different forms, but its nature has continuously evolved. With globalization, terrorism has now reached an international scale. Just as the modern world is changing rapidly, terrorism is also adapting its strategies at the same speed. Social media, encrypted communication systems, and digital networks have become new tools. Earlier, only weapons crossed borders; now, ideologies travel globally.

It has transformed into a complex issue that crosses borders and impacts the entire world. It is no longer just a challenge to security systems, but also to political stability, economic balance, social unity, democratic values, and human rights. Wars once

Improvements in several countries are also positive signs. However, it would be a mistake to assume that terrorism has weakened based solely on these statistics. The threat has not disappeared; it is only transforming. While large-scale attacks may have decreased, small-scale attacks, lone-wolf incidents, and cyber-based terrorist activities are increasing.

New regions are emerging as centers of global terrorism. The Sub-Saharan Africa region and South Asia are key examples. Countries such as Pakistan, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and Niger continue to experience high levels of terrorist activity. This points to an important reality: terrorism is not only a failure of security systems but is also linked to political instability, poverty, unemployment, social inequality, and weak governance structures.

On the other hand, a new challenge is emerging in Western countries: the rise of extremist ideologies among youth. In the past, it took months or years for a person to be drawn into extremist groups. Today, the digital world has accelerated that process. Social media platforms, algorithm-driven content, and online propaganda systems can influence a person's thinking within days. Another dangerous aspect is that the primary goal of social media platforms is to keep users engaged for longer durations. In this process, extremist content can sometimes spread rapidly. Once a person begins viewing such content, more of the same type is continuously recommended, gradually trapping them within a single ideological space.

### Fragmenting Systems:

The impact of terrorist attacks does not end with loss of life. They also severely affect national economies. According to World Bank estimates, GDP growth in terrorism-affected countries may decline by 0.5% to 2% on average. Investor confidence decreases, the tourism sector suffers, and security expenditures rise. From small businesses to international trade, an atmosphere of uncertainty is created, slowing down development.

At the same time, counter-ter-

rorism measures also raise new questions. In the name of security, governments implement strict laws, extensive surveillance systems, and prolonged detentions. In some cases, these raise concerns regarding human rights. Thus, the real challenge for governments is to ensure public safety while also protecting democratic values.

### Challenges and Solutions:

In today's world, the challenges posed by terrorism are not limited to the security sector alone. Cyber terrorism, digital extremist propaganda, lone-wolf attacks, international funding networks, and refugee crises are emerging in new forms. As modern society increasingly depends on digital systems, cyberattacks on networks have become as dangerous as traditional bomb attacks.

Combating terrorism is not only about eliminating terrorists or preventing attacks. It also requires addressing the conditions that give rise to it. Suppressing symptoms without addressing root causes is not a lasting solution. Promoting critical thinking in education, creating opportunities for youth, strengthening social unity, increasing digital awareness, and improving international cooperation are essential for long-term resolution.

Ultimately, one thing becomes clear. Victory over terrorism does not mean killing another terrorist. It means ensuring that another terrorist is never created. Weapons can stop bodies. Security systems can prevent attacks. But only humanity, education, and justice can eliminate hatred. The real question before the world is not "How do we stop terrorists?" but "How do we prevent terrorism from being born?"



for destruction. In such a modern global journey, one of the most dangerous realities accompanying us is terrorism.

At the international level, there is another complex issue. There is no uniform global perspective on terrorism. What is considered terrorism in one country may be viewed differently in another due to political or strategic interests. These double standards are weakening global cooperation.

### Changing Ideology of Terrorism:

A study of history shows that terrorism is not a new problem. Once, terrorism was seen as a security issue limited to certain regions. It was believed to exist only in specific countries or under particular political conditions. In the past, terrorist organizations mainly operated within geographically limited areas, and their activities were confined to those regions. They relied on meetings, printed material, or direct contact to spread their ideology. But today, the situation has completely

took place between nations; today, terrorism has become a conflict between societies, ideologies, and human minds.

Generally, when we hear of the word terrorism, we think of bomb blasts, shootings, killings, and bloodshed. But defining terrorism only through these acts is not a complete perspective. Terrorism is a collection of violent actions carried out with the intention of creating fear among people to achieve political, religious, ethnic, or ideological goals. The real objective is not only to kill individuals but to create insecurity in the minds of people, destabilize society psychologically, and pressure governments. Thus, terrorism is not just a physical war with weapons; it is also a psychological war.

### Current Situation:

The fact that global terrorism deaths in 2025 decreased by 28 percent to 5,582, along with a decline in the number of attacks, appears to be an encouraging development.



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## National Anti-Terrorism Day (21 May)

# India's Decisive Fight Against Terror and the Changing Valley

While India's history has, on one hand, been a land of spirituality, diversity, and the harmony of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family), it has, on the other hand, faced numerous internal and external crises in both the past and the present. The most horrific among these crises is terrorism, which has not only continuously challenged the country's security apparatus but has also shaken its social fabric. Terrorism is not a crisis limited to a specific geographical territory; rather, it is a crisis that wounds the consciousness of the entire nation. India has confronted this problem for decades across multiple levels, including military, diplomatic, social, and ideological fronts. To spread awareness against terrorism and promote peace and harmony, 'National Anti-Terrorism Day' is observed every year on May 21. Observed on May 21, this day is not only a commemoration of this struggle but is also a day of a pledge, demonstrating that India will not tolerate terrorism in any form.

The Kashmir Valley has been the witness to India's longest, most sensitive, and most decisive struggle against terrorism. Once renowned for its unique natural beauty, Sufi traditions, cultural richness, and identity as 'Heaven on Earth', this valley passed through a dreadful era of terror, bloodshed, and instability for the last three decades. The systematic manner in which radicalism and terrorism took root in the valley after 1990 was not merely local discontent but part of a deep conspiracy hatched across the border, aimed at hurting India's unity, integrity, and social harmony. This era devastated thousands of families, snatched the lives of countless

innocents, and forced an entire generation to live under the shadow of fear, insecurity, and violence. Government figures reveal that nearly 42,000 lives have been lost in the thousands of terrorist incidents that occurred in the valley so far, including innocent civilians, brave jawans of the security forces, and terrorists.

According to the report of the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), between the years 2000 and 2024, a total of 22,143 minor and major terrorist attacks were recorded in the valley, in which 4,981 ordinary civilians lost their lives, while 3,624 security personnel were martyred while protecting the motherland. During this same period, the Indian Army and security forces displayed exemplary courage and strategic capability, neutralizing 24,512 terrorists. These are not merely statistics but the saga of the unparalleled valor, sacrifice, and nationalism of those brave jawans who ensured the country's security by sacrificing their lives. However, over the past decade, India's anti-terrorism policy has become more aggressive, technology-enabled, and strategically effective. According to data from the Ministry of Home Affairs, 7,217 terrorist attacks took place across the country between 2004 and 2014, whereas between 2014 and 2024, this number reduced to less than 2,242. During this period, casualties resulting from terrorist violence recorded a decrease of more than 70 percent. The 81 percent drop in ordinary civilian deaths and approximately 50 percent decline in the martyrdom of security personnel is a clear indication that India's robust security strategy, empowered intelligence grid, and policy of 'Zero Tolerance' have achieved significant success in breaking the backbone of terrorism.

However, the statistics make it clear how deep and extensive the challenge of terrorism is, and with what strategic depth India has to operate to deal with it. Looking beyond the 2025 Pahalgam attack, the proof of the restoration of normalcy in the valley in recent years is that today its youth are returning to books, not guns. Student attendance in schools has risen, enrollment numbers in colleges and universities have increased, and a promising growth has been witnessed in the tourism sector as well. The rise in employment opportunities has shown the youth the path to an alternative life. These signs make it clear that terror can be defeated not just by military might, but also through social and economic development. The people of the valley have now understood that the path of terror leads only toward destruction, whereas education, employment, and peace lead to prosperity. But challenges still remain in this journey because Pakistan still maintains a dual policy—talking of peace on one hand, while supporting terrorism on the other. Organizations like Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Hizbul Mujahideen still receive support from the ISI today. In this situation, India's policy toward terrorism has become even more stringent and clear: zero tolerance toward terrorism. This policy is not merely a political statement but a firm strategy of execution. Satellite surveillance at the border, drone technology, equipping security forces with state-of-the-art weapons, and strengthening civil-military coordination are the main pillars of implementing this policy. India now also understands that terrorism is not just a security challenge but an ideological battle as well. It misleads the young mind and attempts to drive it toward violence. In such a sce-

nario, the re-establishment of education, social harmony, and culture is essential. If peace is to be made permanent in the valley, then not just military pressure but psychological and ideological efforts are also absolutely vital. The youth must be reassured that the path to nation-building is paved only through talent, hard work, and positive thinking. They must be told that guns bring only ruin, while books build the future. Today, as India observes National Anti-Terrorism Day, this day is not merely a day of mourning or remembrance but is a symbol of an ongoing resolve. It reminds us that the fight against terror does not belong to the army alone, but is the responsibility of every citizen. When every section of society—intellectuals, youth, women, farmers, traders—becomes a participant in this struggle, only then are the roots of terror shaken. The direction in which India is moving strengthens the belief that the day is not far when the Kashmir Valley will once again be known solely for the shade of Chinar trees, the tranquility of its lakes, and the sweetness of Sufi music. This will be possible only when even the last shadow of terror is erased, and a peaceful, prosperous, and united India is built on the strength of a shared resolve, a shared strategy, and shared action.



YOGESH KUMAR GOYAL  
senior journalist



## NO NEED

Crushed by life, yet standing tall,  
A warrior who fights for all.  
With hands that toil, with hearts so true,  
They shape the world in colors new.

Men of honor, hands of clay,  
Molding wonders every day.  
The wise must see, the great must cheer,  
For such bright souls deserve to steer.

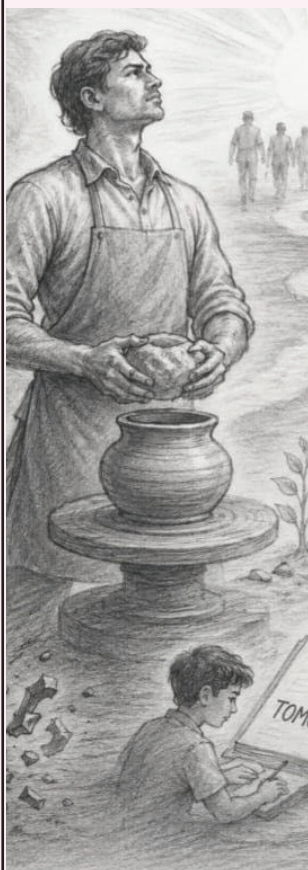
A mirror now, a guiding light,  
A beacon shining through the night.  
For those to come, for days ahead,  
A legacy in gold is spread.

No more requests, no desperate plea,  
Let talent shine, let merit be!  
Like gems that gleam in hidden stone,  
Their worth is clear, their light well known.

Yet whispers crawl, the virus spreads,  
Of favors won by bows and heads.  
A table, a bed, a wedding, a feast,  
A bribe to the highest, a gift to the least.

Shame! Oh shame! In every place,  
A plague that stains, a deep disgrace.  
This old disease still lingers on,  
Yet hope must rise with every dawn.

If tomorrow changes, what a sight!  
Like shadows fleeing from the light.  
No more chains of greed and gain,  
Let honor rise and truth remain.



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

## Himachal CM Hails State's Rise in Education Rankings

SHIMLA

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Wednesday congratulated the Himachal Pradesh education department, students and educators after the state secured the sixth position in the country in providing quality school education in the Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2.0 report recently released by the Union Ministry of Education. According to the report, Himachal has jumped seven places from the 13th to 6th position, while among states, it has secured the third position. Himachal Pradesh Governor Kavinder Gupta too expressed happiness over the state's remarkable progress in the field of quality education at the national level.

# PM calls crucial council meeting today, all ministers asked to stay in Delhi

All Union ministers have been asked to remain in Delhi ahead of a crucial meeting chaired by PM Modi, where governance, the West Asia crisis and possible political changes are expected to dominate discussions.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair a crucial meeting of the Council of Ministers at 4 pm today at Seva Teerth in Delhi, with all Union ministers asked to remain in the national capital during the period amid heightened political and economic discussions within the government. The meeting will take place soon after PM Modi returns from his foreign tour and is



expected to be attended by all Union Cabinet ministers, ministers of state with independent charge and ministers of state. WEST ASIA CONFLICT LIKELY TO FIGURE IN TALKS India Today has learnt that

the ongoing West Asia conflict and its possible economic impact on India are expected to come up during the discussions. The government has been closely monitoring concerns linked to oil prices, fuel supply chains and inflation amid the escalating region-

al tensions. Prime Minister Modi is expected to review the evolving situation after returning from his foreign visit, sources said. The government has already constituted a high-powered informal group of ministers led by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to monitor the crisis and suggest measures to shield India from disruptions. Union ministers Amit Shah, Nirmala Sitharaman and Hardeep Singh Puri are part of the group. Rajnath Singh recently said the government was maintaining "round-the-clock monitoring" of the situation. "Whether it is crude oil, energy, or LPG even today, we have enough stocks. There is no particular problem," Singh had said.

## RESHUFFLE SPECULATION CONTINUES

The meeting has also gained political significance amid growing speculation over a possible Cabinet expansion and reshuffle in the Modi 3.0 government ahead of its first anniversary on June 10. Last week, official sources had indicated that discussions around a reshuffle and expansion were intensifying and that changes in the Union Council of Ministers could take place in the second week of June. Sources had also said the government leadership was reviewing the performance of ministries and organisational functioning ahead of any possible exercise.

## National Journalists Safety Commission Appoints Yogesh Bhatt

as Executive President for Uttarakhand  
Responsibility assigned to strengthen journalists' voices and expand the organization across the state



NEW DELHI, MAY 21

The National Journalists Safety Commission has appointed Shri Yogesh Bhatt as the Executive President for Uttarakhand with immediate effect. The appointment was officially announced through a letter issued by the Commission's National President, Nishikant Rai. Yogesh Bhatt, who belongs to the Kotdwar region of Pauri Garhwal district, has been actively associated with social causes and issues concerning journalists for many years. Considering his experience and working style, the Commission entrusted him with this responsibility. Speaking on the appointment, Nishikant Rai said that under Yogesh Bhatt's leadership, the organization would expand further in Uttarakhand and continue to work strongly on issues related to journalists' welfare and protection.

more effectively. After assuming the role, Yogesh Bhatt said the appointment was both an honour and a major responsibility. He stated that he would work with full dedication for the safety, dignity, and rights of journalists in Uttarakhand. He also said the organization would ensure that every journalist's voice is heard and receives proper support. Bhatt further announced plans to strengthen the organization at the grassroots level by forming district-level teams across the state so that journalists' concerns can be addressed more quickly and efficiently. The National Journalists Safety Commission expressed confidence that under Yogesh Bhatt's leadership, the organization would expand further in Uttarakhand and continue to work strongly on issues related to journalists' welfare and protection.

# Pawar Camp Rules Out Merger With Ajit Group

Confusion, silence and growing rebellion inside Maharashtra's divided NCP have triggered fresh political drama, with Sharad Pawar's camp rejecting merger rumours even as discontent brews within Ajit Pawar's faction.

Senior leaders of the National Congress Party led by Sharad Pawar have firmly rejected any possibility of a merger with Ajit Pawar's faction, even as the veteran leader main-

tained silence on the issue during a crucial strategy meeting in Maharashtra on Tuesday. The closed-door meeting at Mumbai's Y B Chavan Centre came ahead of the party's June 10 foundation day celebrations and took place amid growing turmoil inside the rival Ajit Pawar camp. The issue of a possible reunion dominated discussions after rumours intensified over the past few days, especially following a meeting between Sharad Pawar, Sunil Tatkare and Praful Patel. The speculation gathered further pace as

resentment reportedly mounted against Patel and Tatkare within Ajit Pawar's faction. However, senior NCP (SP) leaders moved quickly to shut down the chatter. While Sharad Pawar chose not to comment directly during the meeting, Supriya Sule and Jayant Patil dismissed all talk of a merger, making it clear that the party had no plans to reunite with Ajit Pawar's faction. The clarification, however, failed to fully calm anxieties within the party. Several MLAs reportedly questioned the leadership over the merger rumours and pushed

for a direct statement from Sharad Pawar himself. According to sources, some elected representatives said grassroots workers were confused and wanted the party chief to publicly spell out the official line. TURMOIL IN AJIT PAWAR CAMP The political uncertainty comes at a time when tensions are escalating within Ajit Pawar's faction. The latest flashpoint emerged after Deputy Chief Minister and NCP leader Sunetra Pawar excluded senior leaders Praful Patel and

Sunil Tatkare from the party's official National Executive list submitted to the Election Commission. The move is being seen as a sign of deepening divisions within the Ajit Pawar camp and has opened a political opportunity for Sharad Pawar and his loyalists. Adding to the pressure, sources claimed around 22 dissatisfied MLAs from the Ajit Pawar faction have already met Sharad Pawar in recent weeks. The meetings have fuelled speculation that several leaders could cross over if the unrest within the rival camp

continues. 'MERGER TALKS OVER' In an attempt to draw a line under the speculation, Maharashtra NCP (SP) president Shashikant Shinde announced that all merger-related rumours had been put to rest. Despite the public denial, political circles in Maharashtra continue to closely watch the developments inside both factions of the divided NCP, especially with signs of rebellion growing stronger within Ajit Pawar's camp ahead of a politically crucial period for the party.

## Ashutosh Pant Conducts Comprehensive Inspection

Design Department, Emphasizes Innovation and Modern Design

VARANASI, MAY 20

Mr. Ashutosh Pant, General Manager of the Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW), conducted a comprehensive inspection of the Design Department today, undertaking an in-depth review of the technical activities, design development initiatives, and modern design processes currently underway within the department. During the inspection, while observing various sections, he issued necessary directives aimed at further strengthening quality, technical efficiency, and an innovation-driven work culture.



emphasized the need for the optimal utilization of modern technical resources, the systematic development of the workspace, and the promotion of digitization. He commended the department for the effective deployment of state-of-the-art software and design technologies in its operations.

On this occasion, he offered valuable suggestions for the development of a state-of-the-art design conference room within the department, placing strong emphasis on further bolstering technical deliberations, innovation, and a research-driven methodology. During the inspection, Principal Chief Electrical Engineer Mr. Manish Kumar, Chief Design Engineer (Electrical) Mr. Anurag Kumar Gupta, Chief Design Engineer (Diesel) Mr. Praveen Kumar, Chief Design Engineer (Projects) Mr. Kaushlesh Singh, and Deputy General Manager Mr. Sagar were present, along with numerous other officers and employees of the Design Department. Appreciating the officers and employees, General Manager Mr. Ashutosh Pant stated that BLW is successfully meeting the requirements of both Indian Railways and the global railway sector through modern technology, innovation-driven design, and high-quality standards. He expressed confidence that the Design Department would continue to play a pivotal role in taking BLW to new heights by developing advanced technical solutions in the future as well.

# Haryana Forms Grievance Panel for HKRNL Contractual Staff

CHANDIGARH, MAY 20:

The Haryana Government has constituted a Coordination Grievance Redressal Committee for the timely and effective resolution of issues related to the Job Security Law and matters concerning contractual manpower engaged through the Haryana Kaushal Rozgar Nigam Limited (HKRNL). The committee has been formed with immediate effect to ensure speedy grievance redressal and minimize avoidable litigation. An order in this regard has been issued by Chief Secretary Sh. Anurag Rastogi. According to the order, the committee will function under the chairmanship of the General Manager, HKRNL. The committee will also include the concerned Su-

perintendent from the Human Resources Department dealing with HKRNL and Job Security matters, the concerned Superintendent from the Finance Department, IT Head of the CRID Department, and the Managing Director or nominee of Haryana Knowledge Corporation Limited. HKRNL will serve as the nodal agency for convening meetings and coordinating with all concerned departments. The committee has been tasked with examining issues related to the Job Security Law, contractual manpower engagement, eligibility disputes and service verification. It will facilitate inter-departmental coordination among the Human Resources Department, HKRNL, Finance Department, CRID and other con-

cerned administrative departments. The committee will also undertake pre-litigation examination of disputes and attempt administrative resolution before matters reach courts. It will provide time-bound recommendations and identify cases likely to result in litigation so that suitable administrative remedies can be initiated in advance. As per the directions, the committee will meet at least twice a week initially, with the flexibility to increase the frequency depending on workload. Meetings may be conducted in physical or virtual mode as required. The government has stipulated that grievances should ordinarily be resolved within 15 days from the date of cognizance. However, the timeline may be extended

by up to 10 additional days wherever necessary. The order further states that since HKRNL already operates an online grievance redressal system, all grievances must first be filed mandatorily on the HKRNL grievance portal. Only unresolved matters will thereafter be escalated to the Coordination Grievance Redressal Committee for further examination and resolution. The government has also directed that all contractual employees engaged through HKRNL, Boards, Corporations and Government Departments must avail the grievance redressal mechanism available on the HKRNL portal before seeking judicial intervention. Administrative remedies are to be exhausted prior to approaching courts.

# NFR's Amrit Bharat Express Trains in Assam and West Bengal

MALIGAON, 20 MAY, 2026

Achieve Remarkable Success and Passenger Appreciation

The introduction of the modern and passenger-friendly Amrit Bharat Express trains from various stations of Assam & West Bengal under the jurisdiction of Northeast Frontier Railway has emerged as a major success story in Indian Railways, receiving exceptional appreciation and overwhelming response from passengers across the country. The impressive occupancy and earnings figures clearly reflect the growing popularity, affordability, comfort and reliability of these services among the travelling public. The Amrit Bharat Express services connecting key destinations such as Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Alipurduar Junction and New Jalpaiguri with major cities across India have recorded remarkable passenger utilisation since their introduction from January, 2026. Several services registered occupancy levels significantly above 100%, highlighting the immense public demand and the increasing preference of passengers for these trains. A total of 07 pairs of Amrit Bharat Express trains are



presently originating from Assam & West Bengal in the jurisdiction of NFR. These include Train No. 15671/15672 operating between Kamakhya and Rohtak, Train No. 15949/15950 operating between Dibrugarh and Gomti Nagar, Train No. 16597/16598 operating between Alipurduar Junction and SMVT Bengaluru, Train No. 11031/11032 operating between Alipurduar Junction and Parnel, Train No. 15673/15674 operating between Kamakhya and Charlapalli, Train No. 20609/20610 operating between New Jalpaiguri and Tiruchchirappalli and Train No. 20603/20604 operating between New Jalpaiguri and Nagercoil. All these services

have been receiving highly encouraging passenger patronage and are significantly strengthening rail connectivity between the Northeast and different regions of the country. Among the major achievements, Train No. 15671/15672 Amrit Bharat Express operating between Kamakhya and Rohtak witnessed outstanding passenger patronage with utilisation reaching up to 136%. Similarly, Train No. 15949/15950 Amrit Bharat Express connecting Dibrugarh and Gomti Nagar recorded impressive occupancy figures exceeding 140% on multiple trips, demonstrating the immense popularity and growing public confidence in the service. During this

period, these Amrit Bharat Express trains carried more than 1.78 lakh passengers and generated earnings exceeding Rs. 23 crores highlighting the remarkable success of these services. Designed especially for common passengers, Amrit Bharat trains provide enhanced comfort and improved travel experience with modern interiors, better amenities, spacious seating arrangements and economical fares. The services are not only improving passenger convenience but are also contributing significantly towards regional development, tourism promotion and economic integration by strengthening connectivity between the Northeast and the rest of the country. Northeast Frontier Railway remains committed to continuously enhancing passenger amenities and delivering safe, efficient and passenger-centric railway services. The remarkable success of the Amrit Bharat Express trains stands as a reflection of Indian Railways' vision of inclusive growth, modernisation and accessible transportation for all sections of society.



## Renusagar Talent Shines at National Level

Aarohi Brijesh Makes Uttar Pradesh Proud

BY SANJAY DWIVEDI

Sonbhadra: Aarohi Brijesh brought laurels to Uttar Pradesh with her outstanding performance at the prestigious VVM National Level Fourth Stage Competition held at IIT Gandhinagar on 16th and 17th May 2026. Earlier, she had secured her place at the national level after excelling in the State Level VVM Competition organized in Gorakhpur. More than 500 participants from across India and abroad took part in this national-level competition. Aarohi delivered an exceptional performance and earned a place among the top performers in the Central Zone, which included participants from Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Bihar, and Jharkhand. As a reward for this remarkable achieve-

ment at the national level, Aarohi has become eligible for a special three-week internship program at some of India's premier research institutions, including the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), and Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC). Currently, Aarohi is also participating in a six-week research internship under the "Kriti" Research Program at IIT Kharagpur. A student of DPS Ranchi, Aarohi credited her success to her former teacher, Ms. Rachna Srivastava of The Aditya Birla Public School, Renusagar, whose guidance and inspiration played a significant role in helping her achieve this milestone.

## India Marks World Metrology Day 2026, Joshi Stresses Accurate Measurement Role

The Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India, today commemorated World Metrology Day 2026, marking the 151st anniversary of the historic Metre Convention signed in Paris on 20th May 1875. The theme of this year's World Metrology Day is "Metrology: Building Trust in Policy Making". The Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Shri Pralhad Joshi, in his virtual address highlighted the vital role of metrology in ensuring fairness, consumer protection, scientific reliability and transparent governance. Referring to this year's theme, the Minister emphasized that accurate and reliable measurements form the backbone of effective public policy, trade, healthcare, environmental protection and industrial growth. The Union Minister stated that the Department has strengthened India's legal metrology verification infrastructure by issuing 40 Government Approved Test Centre (GATC) certificates to

eligible private entities, marking a significant step towards expanding the country's verification capacity. Highlighting the Government's vision of trust-based and technology-driven governance, Shri Pralhad Joshi underlined several key reforms undertaken by the Department of Consumer Affairs. These include the decriminalization of minor offences under the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2026, introduction of improvement notices for certain minor violations, and transition from a licensing regime to a registration-based system for improving ease of doing business. The Minister further informed that the e-Maap portal has been launched as a unified digital platform for registration and enforcement-related services under Legal Metrology. The portal will facilitate services such as verification of weights and measures, registrations, model approvals and enforcement-related activities at both Centre and State levels.

# MELODI DIPLOMACY

# Chinese scam networks target Americans

**ROME MOMENT THAT WON THE INTERNET**

## A ₹1 TOFFEE, A BILLION IMPRESSIONS

**MODI'S MELODI DIPLOMACY GOES VIRAL**

**SWEET GESTURE. STRONG MESSAGE. GLOBAL IMPACT.**

**PRIME MINISTER MODI BROUGHT US A GIFT — A VERY, VERY GOOD TOFFEE.**

**—Giorgia Meloni, Prime Minister, Italy**

**#MELODI THE HASHTAG THAT UNITED TWO LEADERS AND MILLIONS ONLINE**

**STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**  
India and Italy upgrade ties to Special Strategic Partnership; target €20 billion trade by 2029.

**MELODI SELLS OUT**  
Toffee vanishes from quick commerce platforms within hours across India.

**MARKET CONFUSION**  
Unrelated Parle Industries stock hits upper circuit as retail investors go on a frenzy.

**PARLE'S SWEET REPLY**  
Parle Products replies: "Sweetening relationships since 1983."

**PHOTO BY HOMAI VYARAWALLA (DAIDA 15), INDIA'S FIRST WOMAN PHOTOJOURNALIST.**

**SHOWS JAWAHARLAL NEHRU LIGHTING A CIGARETTE FOR A BRITISH DIPLOMAT'S WIFE IN THE 1950s/60s.**

**A CANDID MOMENT FROM A DIFFERENT ERA — now used in viral meme to draw a sharp contrast.**

**HOMAI VYARAWALLA (1915-2012) PIONEER, WITNESS, LEGEND.**

**FROM INDIAN SWEETNESS... TO PLEASING FOREIGN POWERS...**

**SOMETIMES, SWEETNESS TRAVELS BETTER THAN SMOKE.**

**NEW INDIA. NEW CONFIDENCE. NEW DIPLOMACY.**

One ₹1 Indian toffee. One smiling Italian Prime Minister. One viral moment that exploded across continents. Prime Minister Narendra Modi handing over a packet of Melody chocolates to Giorgia Meloni in Rome was not merely a casual exchange. It became a global meme, a soft power masterstroke, a social media storm, and a sharp reminder of how India's diplomatic language has transformed from elite drawing room symbolism to mass cultural confidence. But the viral meme comparing Modi's "Melody diplomacy" with Jawaharlal Nehru lighting a cigarette for a foreign diplomat's wife also opened a deeper debate about India's changing political psychology, historical memory, and visual propaganda in the age of memes.

BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

Rome witnessed many treaties. Empires rose and collapsed there. But this week, the internet decided that the real diplomatic breakthrough was wrapped in caramel and chocolate. At the elegant Villa Doria Pamphili in Rome, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni upgraded India Italy ties into a Special Strategic Partnership. Defence cooperation, clean energy, artificial intelligence, maritime security, space collaboration, critical minerals, trade corridors, agriculture, and education dominated the official agenda. Then came the unscripted political gold. Modi handed over a packet of Parle Melody chocolates. Meloni laughed, held the packet up for cameras, and declared with visible delight: "Prime Minister Modi brought us a gift — a very, very good toffee. Melody." Both smiled. Both said "Melody" together. And within minutes, diplomacy escaped conference rooms and entered meme culture.

### THE RETURN OF "MELODI"

The hashtag "#Melodi" did not begin yesterday. It was already floating across global social media after previous warm interactions between Modi and Meloni during G20 meetings and COP summits. Meloni herself had earlier amplified the nickname through selfies and playful captions. But this time, the meme found its perfect prop. Not a luxury shawl. Not a crystal sculpture. Not a ceremonial sword. A ₹1 Indian toffee.

That simplicity became the story. Suddenly, the world was not watching stiff diplomatic choreography. The world was watching relatability. The chemistry looked organic, not manufactured. The symbolism looked local, not elite. The message was loud without being spoken: India no longer feels compelled to imitate global sophistication. It exports its own everyday cul-

ture unapologetically. That is precisely why the moment exploded.

### THE TOFFEE THAT TRIGGERED A MARKET MADNESS

Within hours, Melody vanished from quick commerce platforms across Indian cities. Parle Products grabbed the moment brilliantly. The company posted: "Sweetening relationships since 1983." The internet loved it. But India being India, the meme economy quickly mutated into financial comedy. Retail investors mistakenly rushed into buying shares of an unrelated listed company named

### HOW MELODI BECAME INDIA'S EMOTIONAL EXPORT

Launched in 1983 by Parle Products, Melody built cult status across generations through its iconic tagline: "Melody itni chocolaty kyun hai?" For millions of Indians, it was never merely candy. It was school nostalgia, pocket money economics, and middle class childhood memory packed into brown wrapping paper. That emotional memory resurfaced globally in Rome. And suddenly, a local Indian sweet became an international diplomatic symbol.

Parle Industries. The stock reportedly surged sharply simply because traders confused it with the actual Melody maker.

This is modern India in one frame. A diplomatic meeting triggers a meme. The meme triggers nostalgia. Nostalgia triggers panic buying. Panic buying triggers stock market confusion. And somewhere in the middle sits one humble caramel chocolate toffee quietly watching the circus.

### THE MEME THAT OPENED AN OLD POLITICAL WAR

But the internet was not satisfied with sweetness alone. Soon, another image appeared beneath the Modi Meloni frame. A black and white photograph of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru lighting a cigarette for the wife of a British diplomat. The image was authentic. The

photographer was legendary Indian photo-journalist Homai Vyarawalla, the pioneering chronicler of India's transition from colonial rule to independent republic. And instantly, the meme acquired ideological teeth. Top panel: Modi

offering Indian sweetness to the world. Bottom panel: Nehru offering a lighter to colonial era diplomatic company. The implication was brutal and unmistakable. One India supposedly seeking approval. Another India supposedly projecting confidence. That contrast is exactly why the meme spread like wildfire.

### HISTORY IS NEVER AS SIMPLE AS MEME MAKERS WANT IT TO BE

But here is where serious analysis must separate itself from internet theatre. The Nehru photograph was not evidence of national surrender. It reflected elite diplomatic etiquette of that era. Smoking was socially acceptable. Lighting cigarettes was considered courteous behaviour in international circles. Nehru himself was known for his cosmopolitan personality and comfort within global diplomatic culture. The photograph captured a candid social moment. Nothing more. Reducing an entire foreign policy doctrine into one cigarette lighter is intellectually lazy. At the same time, dismissing the emotional impact of the comparison would also be dishonest. Because memes do not survive on historical accuracy alone. They survive on emotional symbol-

ism. And emotionally, the contrast works powerfully for today's political climate. One frame represents post colonial elite diplomacy. The other represents populist cultural confidence. That perception matters more than academic nuance in today's digital battlefield.

### INDIA'S NEW DIPLOMATIC LANGUAGE

This is where the real story lies. Modern diplomacy is no longer confined to joint statements and strategic communiqués. It now operates through emotion, visual branding, relatability, and viral recall. A yoga pose. A temple visit. A local food reference. A cultural phrase. Or now, a Melody toffee. These become diplomatic instruments. Narendra Modi understands visual politics with extraordinary instinct. Giorgia Meloni understands social media virality equally well. Together, they created a moment tailor made for the algorithm age. No expensive PR firm could have manufactured such authentic meme energy. The image travelled because it felt human.

### WHEN A TOFFEE BECAME A FOREIGN POLICY MESSAGE

The most fascinating part of this entire episode is not the toffee itself. It is the transformation of India's self image. There was a time when Indian diplomacy often borrowed prestige from Western approval. Today, India increasingly projects confidence through its own cultural vocabulary, whether critics like the style or not. That does not make earlier generations weak. That does not automatically make current politics flawless. But it does show how national confidence expresses itself differently across eras. The Nehru cigarette image belongs to one chapter of history. The Melody packet belongs to another. And in the ruthless arena of internet politics, sweetness travels faster than smoke.

WASHINGTON

Americans lost at least \$10 billion in 2024 to China-linked scam networks operating from Southeast Asia, top Congressmen have alleged warning that this fraud ecosystem has grown into a national security threat.

House Select Committee on China Chairman, John Moolenaar said the scams were being run at "industrial scale" by criminal groups linked to China and enabled by corruption, weak governance and illicit finance. "These victims are our families, neighbours and friends, and they are being ripped off by sophisticated criminal networks linked to China," Moolenaar said.

The committee released a bipartisan investigative report that said the scam networks were not isolated criminal enterprises, but part of a larger ecosystem of fraud, human trafficking, cyber crime and illicit finance. Moolenaar said the Chinese government did not centrally direct the scam compounds, but its "deliberate failure to combat this threat" had enabled their growth.

Ranking member Ro Khanna said many scam networks operate from compounds in Southeast Asia controlled by organised criminal groups with links to China.

"All too often, the person on the other end of the text is a human trafficking victim, locked in a scam compound with instructions to steal as much money from victims



as possible," the Indian American Congressman said. He said the committee investigation found that the headquarters of Prince Group in Cambodia was constructed by a Chinese state-owned enterprise.

"I want to be clear. While there are Chinese ties, the scam is not a vast conspiracy by the Chinese government," Khanna said. "We can't solve this crisis without their cooperation." Erin West, founder of Operation Shamrock, told lawmakers that victims were not getting adequate help from law enforcement.

"Why in the United States in 2026, are victims having to solve their own crimes?" she quoted one victim as asking. West called the crisis a "Scamdemic" and said it was "not simply fraud." "This is national security," she said.

Jacob Sims, an independent analyst, said the deeper threat was

not only the compounds but "the political architecture that protects it". He described Cambodia as "an advanced case of what criminal authoritarianism looks like in the digital era".

Jason Tower, a senior expert at the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, said China's domestic crackdown had pushed scam networks abroad.

"This is not a Southeast Asia problem. This is a global China problem," Tower said. Lawmakers also pressed witnesses on the role of social media platforms, cryptocurrency networks and private companies in enabling the scams.

Moolenaar urged Congress to pass the bipartisan Dismantle Foreign Scam Syndicates Act. The measure would create an inter-agency task force to counter foreign scam syndicates.

# India and South Korea discuss strengthening defence ties, creating avenues for joint development

SEOUL

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held a meeting with South Korean Minister for Defence Acquisition Programme Administration, Lee Yong-chul in Seoul on Wednesday with both sides agreeing to make efforts to create avenues for joint development, production and exports.

"Had a fruitful meeting with the South Korean Minister for Defence Acquisition Program Administration, Mr. Lee Yong-chul in Seoul. We agreed to harness the symbiotic efforts to create avenues for Joint Development, Joint Production and Joint Exports," Singh posted on X after the meeting.

"Roadmap to unlock the potential of the ambitious KIND-X initiative to synergise the innovation ecosystems of two countries was discussed," he added.

Earlier in the day, Defence Minister Singh held a meeting with his South Korean counterpart Ahn Gyu Back in Seoul, discussing ways to further deepen the defence cooperation between two nations.

"Held an excellent meeting with my South Korean counterpart, Ahn Gyu Back in Seoul. We discussed ways to further deepen India-Republic of Korea defence, defence industry and strategic cooperation, with a shared commitment towards regional peace, stability and technological collaboration," Singh



posted on X. "It was a highly productive meeting as India and Korea exchanged Agreements on Promoting Defence Cyber Cooperation, between National Defence College of India and Korea National Defence University of RoK and UN Peacekeeping Cooperation making our partnership stronger and multidimensional. Looking forward to strengthening the special strategic partnership between our nations," he added.

Rajnath Singh also laid wreath at the National Cemetery of Korea and paid homage to the brave soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice in service of their nation. "Laid wreath at the National Cemetery of Korea

and paid homage to the brave soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice in service of their nation. Their courage, dedication and spirit of patriotism remain an enduring source of inspiration. India stands in solidarity with the Republic of Korea in honouring the legacy of its heroes," he stated.

Singh arrived in Seoul on Tuesday on an official visit aimed at further strengthening defence cooperation and strategic partnership between India and South Korea. He expressed confidence that his visit to South Korea will provide an opportunity to deepen bilateral ties and enhance collaboration in areas of mutual interest.

# Trump touts USD18 trillion investment surge

WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump on Wednesday projected strong economic growth for the United States, claiming trillions of dollars in investments were flowing into the country as he predicted a manufacturing boom driven by foreign companies setting up plants across America.

Trump told reporters at the White House that the US economy is entering an unprecedented period of expansion. "We have 18 trillion being spent, and no country has had anything like that," he said.

He pointed to automobile manufacturing as a key example of renewed industrial investment. "We have car companies and plants coming in from Germany, from South Korea, from Japan coming in by the billions, and they're being built now," he said.

Trump argued that companies were shifting production to the United States to gain access



to the American market. "The reason to be there cause they wanna sell our market," he said. The President said Americans would witness economic developments unlike anything seen before.

"You're gonna see things that nobody thought were possible," Trump said. "You're gonna see a lot of amazing things over the next three years for our country."

The remarks came as Trump sought to reinforce his economic message amid continued focus

on trade, tariffs, and domestic manufacturing. Throughout the interaction, he repeatedly pivoted from foreign policy questions to economic issues, signalling that investment and industrial growth would remain central themes of his administration.

Trump also linked the investment inflows to broader confidence in the United States economy. "The economic numbers" were "phenomenal," he said, while expressing optimism about future growth.

# Anyone linked to Awami League no longer safe in B'desh: Party on targeted attacks

DHAKA

Bangladesh's Awami League on Wednesday expressed grave concern over the targeted attacks on its leaders, activists, and their families that have continued unabated in 2026. The party warned that persistent silence from the international community on the issue could push the country further into brutality and prolonged political violence.

Condemning the recent incident in Ukhya upazila of Cox's Bazar district, where 55-year-old Syada Begum died while trying to protect her son during an alleged attack by workers of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its student wing, Chhatra Dal, the Awami League said that "horrifying tragedy" is not an isolated incident but a broad-



er pattern of violence across the country. "A mother, who rushed forward to protect her son from a mob of BNP and Chhatra Dal activists, ended up dead. Why? In the unyielding landscape of modern Bangladesh, the answer is as simple as it is terrifying: her thirty-two-year-old son, SM Imran, had committed the unpardonable 'crime' of being linked to a political slogan, 'Joy Bangla,'" the party stated, criticising the assault. According to the Awami League, the situation on the ground indicates that anyone connected to the Awami League is no longer safe, even if they have committed no proven wrongdoing, adding that attacks and killings are increasing at an alarming rate across several districts.

The party noted that supporters of the current BNP-

led government often justify the violence, describing it as "a natural reaction to the past government", while independent critics and political analysts warn of a highly dangerous shift in the situation.

"While Bangladesh has always had strong political rivalries, the daily hunting of low-level workers and their innocent families at this scale is completely new," it added.

The Awami League cited human rights groups highlighting a worrying pattern of deaths inside regional prisons involving detained political figures since the political transition following the ouster of the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government in 2024.

Emphasising that the state's responsibility is to ensure the safety of all those in its custody, the party said that the

deaths of detainees in prison reflect a complete collapse of accountability.

"Even worse, when arrested leaders are brought to court, large mobs are allowed to assault them right outside the courtroom perimeters. These individuals are often attacked while handcuffed, while the police escort struggles or fails to protect them. If the state cannot guarantee safety inside its own courts and prisons, the justice system itself fails," it mentioned.

Calling on the world leaders to raise their voice against the atrocities, the Awami League said that treating such "horrific events" as a minor domestic issue would be a dangerous mistake, stressing that "human rights belong to everyone, and they do not disappear when a political party loses power".

## Airtel Payments Bank posts robust growth in FY26; revenue at ₹3,207 crore

Net profit grew to ₹109 crores; customer balances grow 26% YoY to ₹4,612 crore

NEW DELHI, 20 MAY 2026:



Airtel Payments Bank today announced its results for the financial year ended on March 31, 2026. For the full year, revenue stood at ₹3,207 crore, registering a growth of 18.4% year-on-year. Net profit came in at ₹109 crore, with profit margins improving to 3.4%, reflecting the structural maturity and operating leverage of the business. Customer balances rose 26% year-on-year to ₹4,612 crore, while annualised Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) reached ₹4,542 billion. The Bank continued to see strong customer momentum with savings bank account monthly transacting users (SBA MTU) growing to 28.8 million. Airtel Payments Bank remains the third-largest mobile bank in India by user base, reflecting the scale and stickiness of its digital-first, tech-led model. Anubrata Biswas, MD and CEO, Airtel Payments Bank, said, "Our strong performance this year reflects continued customer trust and the resilience of our

business model. The strong adoption of our Safe Second Account underlines the growing need for a secure, seamless digital banking solution. Our differentiated model, combining a mobile-first platform with a large distribution network, enables us to serve customers across segments effectively. As we scale further, our focus remains on building a digital bank that meaningfully addresses the evolving financial needs of India." The Bank continues to see strong traction for its Safe Second Account, particularly in urban markets, making it the digital bank of choice. Customers are increasingly using it for daily digital transactions and recurring payments. This has driven higher engagement,

with the Bank emerging as the second-largest player in UPI Autopay mandates. The Bank's transit business continues to scale rapidly, with over 6 million National Common Mobility Cards (NCMC) issued, making it the second-largest issuer in the segment. Processing two out of every three transit payments across supported networks, the Bank plays a critical role in enabling frictionless, cashless mobility at scale. In rural India, Airtel Payments Bank's uniquely differentiated model, combining deep physical reach with a robust digital platform, positions it strongly to serve underserved communities. The Bank processes one in four AEPs transactions and one in every two remittances. With over 500,000 active banking points, the Bank continues to bridge access gaps by serving three in four villages and processing approximately 1% of India's Direct Benefit Transfers. Airtel Payments Bank is seeing strong momentum in omnichannel B2B digital payments, partnering with leading aggregators and processing transactions worth

USD 16 billion. It is also enabling small offline merchants to join the digital economy through an integrated offering of current accounts, QR, and soundbox solutions, supporting seamless, real-time payments and efficient settlements. Airtel Payments Bank continues to play a key role in driving digital banking and financial inclusion by enabling seamless, secure, and accessible banking services across the country.

### About Airtel Payments Bank

Airtel Payments Bank offers a diverse range of safe, simple, and rewarding digital banking solutions through its robust digital platforms and extensive network of over 5 lakh active banking points spread across the country. As one of the fastest growing digital banks in the country, it has built a strong and inclusive digital payments system that empowers millions of customers. Airtel Payments Bank is focused on contributing to the Government's vision of Digital India and Financial Inclusion by taking digital banking services to the doorstep of every Indian.

## Samsung and Google Give First Look at New Intelligent Eyewear

Net profit grew to ₹109 crores; customer balances grow 26% YoY to ₹4,612 crore

SEOUL, KOREA - MAY 20, 2026



Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd. and Google today unveiled new intelligent eyewear at Google I/O 2026 by giving a first look at two premium styles created with eyewear partners Gentle Monster and Warby Parker. Designed to work as a companion device to a mobile phone, the new eyewear enables users to access help through voice interaction and connect seamlessly to their phones, all through a familiar form factor. Co-created with the eyewear partners, the intelligent eyewear combines breakthrough AI capabilities with comfort and style, merging Samsung's leadership in hardware engineering and Google's AI technology with premium eyewear design. Each eyewear brand brings a distinct design approach to the device. Renowned for their legacies in fashion eyewear, Gentle Monster presents styles with disruptive yet refined aesthetics, while Warby Parker showcases refined and timeless designs. Built to understand the world alongside users in real time, the new intelligent eyewear provides everyday support while keeping users hands-free and heads-up. Users can access

navigation assistance by simply asking Gemini with their voices, receive personalized suggestions such as a nearby coffee shop on their walking route, or even place an order for pickup. Users can also receive summarized notifications for important texts and add events to their calendars. Additional features include real-time translations with audio that matches the speaker's voice, as well as the ability to translate text on menus or signs in the user's line of sight. Working seamlessly within the Galaxy ecosystem, the device helps users easily manage everyday tasks or effortlessly capture photos, all without taking their phone out. "This intelligent eyewear marks an important step in Samsung's vision for AI," said Jay Kim, Executive Vice President and Head of Customer Experience Office, Mobile eXperience (MX)

Business at Samsung Electronics. "With this new AI form factor, we are further expanding the Galaxy device ecosystem, where each device is optimized to deliver unique AI experiences that best fit each form." "Intelligent eyewear represents a powerful step forward in our shared vision with Samsung to make AI more helpful and accessible in everyday life," said Shahram Izadi, Vice President and GM of Android XR at Google. "Combining the best of Google's AI and the Android ecosystem together with Samsung's leadership in mobile hardware and Gentle Monster and Warby Parker's premium design, we are helping users stay connected and fashionable in a more natural, hands-free way." "Intelligent eyewear should feel as emotionally expressive as it is technologically advanced," said Hankook Kim, Founder and CEO of Gentle Monster. "Our vision was to merge fashion and technology in a way that feels bold, beautiful and human, bringing Gentle Monster's disruptive design identity into a new era of intelligent eyewear with Samsung and Google." "Eyewear is deeply personal, which is why every detail matters when integrating advanced technology into frames people wear every day," said Dave

Gilboa, Co-Founder and Co-CEO of Warby Parker. "Our Intelligent Eyewear is designed to feel intuitive, combining Warby Parker's signature design with precision optics and exceptional comfort to help people stay focused on the moments in front of them." The first collections of intelligent eyewear are scheduled to launch this fall in select markets, with additional details to be announced in the coming months.

### About Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd.

Samsung inspires the world and shapes the future with transformative ideas and technologies. The company is redefining the worlds of TVs, digital signage, smartphones, wearables, tablets, home appliances and network systems, as well as memory, system LSI and foundry. Samsung is also advancing medical imaging technologies, HVAC solutions and robotics, while creating innovative automotive and audio products through Harman. With its SmartThings ecosystem, open collaboration with partners, and integration of AI across its portfolio, Samsung delivers a seamless and intelligent connected experience. For the latest news, please visit the Samsung Newsroom at news.samsung.com.

# Sensex, Nifty close higher despite rupee hitting fresh record low amid Iran war worries

Stock markets ended marginally higher on Wednesday, recovering from intraday weakness with support from heavyweights like Reliance Industries, even as a falling rupee, elevated crude oil prices and global uncertainty continued to keep investors cautious.

The BSE Sensex rose 117.54 points, or 0.16%, to close at 75,318.39, while the NSE Nifty50 gained 41 points, or 0.17%, to settle at 23,659.

Markets remained volatile through the session as investors tracked rising global bond yields, persistent tensions in West Asia and concerns around the impact of high oil prices on India's economy.

### RUPEE HITS FRESH RECORD LOW

One of the biggest concerns for Dalal Street remained the Indian rupee, which touched another lifetime low on Wednesday. The

rupee slipped to 96.96 against the US dollar during the day before closing at 96.82. The currency has now weakened more than 6% since the Iran conflict began in late February. The fall in the rupee has increased worries around imported inflation, rising fuel costs and pressure on India's external finances. Analysts said stalled US-Iran peace talks and rising global bond yields have made investors nervous, hurting risk appetite across emerging markets, including India.

### RELIANCE INDUSTRIES LEADS MARKET RECOVERY

The market found support from Reliance Industries shares, which jumped 2.8%, marking their best single-day gain in more than three weeks. The stock had fallen nearly 10% over the previous 10 trading sessions, and Wednesday's buying helped lift the broader indices. Auto, financial and oil & gas stocks also saw selective buying support.



Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments Limited, said markets recovered from lower levels due to buying in large-cap stocks. "Markets recovered from intraday lows, supported by selective buying in large cap stocks across autos, financials, and oil & gas. Autos and financials gained on relatively better Q4 earnings, while recent fuel price hikes supported sentiment for OMCs and refiners," he said.

### CRUDE OIL STILL ABOVE USD 109

Crude oil prices eased slightly during the session but remained

elevated. Brent crude was trading near USD 109 per barrel, while India continues to face pressure as it imports around 90% of its crude oil requirements. The Iran conflict has kept energy markets volatile for months, pushing global inflation concerns higher. High crude oil prices are especially important for India because they directly impact fuel prices, inflation, transport costs and the rupee. Vinod Nair said elevated crude prices and rupee weakness are still major concerns for investors. "Persistent rupee weakness and elevated

crude prices continue to weigh on sentiment due to concerns around inflation and margin pressures, while FII flows remain mixed," he said.

### WHICH STOCKS GAINED AND FELL?

Among major gainers on the Sensex and Nifty were:

- Reliance Industries, up 2.83%
- Bajaj Finserv, up 1.33%
- Trent, up 1.02%
- IndiGo, up 0.99%
- Axis Bank, up 0.98%
- NTPC, up 0.80%
- Adani Ports, and Power Grid also closed in the green.

### On the losing side:

- BEL fell 2.30%
- Tech Mahindra declined 1.85%. Eternal dropped 1.52%
- Tata Steel slipped 1.08%
- Hindustan Unilever lost 1.01%

### SECTORAL INDICES SHOW MIXED TREND

Among sectoral indices, Nifty

Pharma rose 0.55%, while Nifty Healthcare gained 0.33%. Nifty IT also ended slightly higher.

### However, several sectors remained under pressure:

- Nifty Realty fell 1.32%
- Nifty PSU Bank declined 1.14%
- Nifty Media dropped 1.89%
- Nifty Auto slipped 0.86%

Broader markets showed a mixed trend, with Nifty Midcap100 gaining 0.5% while Smallcap indices remained largely flat.

### GLOBAL MARKETS REMAIN UNDER PRESSURE

Global sentiment remained cautious as US bond yields stayed near multi-year highs.

Higher US Treasury yields reduce the appeal of equities for foreign investors and have led to heavy foreign selling in Indian markets this year. Foreign investors have already sold nearly USD 23 billion worth of Indian equities in 2026, surpassing last year's record outflows.

## Asthma care: Doctor calls for early control, cautions against

HYDERABAD, MAY 20, 2026

Asthma management in India continues to lean heavily towards symptomatic relief, leading to poor disease control and worsening of the condition. Doctor highlights the critical need to focus on early asthma control and a shift from only short-term relief measures to appropriate long-term management for better patient outcomes and quality of life. Asthma is often treated as an episodic illness with patients reaching for their reliever inhalers as soon as symptoms such as shortness of breath or coughing arise. However, asthma is a chronic condition caused by inflammation in the airway. "Asthma management should focus on treating the inflammation at the earliest. Poorly controlled asthma may increase the risk of structural airway changes and persistent inflammation leading to frequent flare-ups and hospitalizations. There may also be progressive decline in lung function which makes the disease hard to manage," Dr. Ramakrishna Reddy, Consultant Pulmonologist, Mana Hospital, Hyderabad said. To address this inflammation, inhaled corticosteroids (ICS) treatment is recommended. Controller inhalers, or anti-inflammatory inhalers, should be used regularly to treat the underlying airway inflammation and help maintain long-term control,

instead of relying only on reliever inhalers, particularly short-acting beta-agonists (SABA), that provide temporary relief by relaxing the airway muscles during an asthma episode. Asthma affects around 35 million people in India. Almost 90% of patients who require ICS treatment, are not receiving or using it, according to a research report published in Lung India journal. This shows the gap in asthma management and the need to improve awareness around controller inhaler-based treatment.

"Reliever inhalers may provide temporary relief from symptoms but they do not treat the root cause of the disease. Asthma management should focus on long-term control of inflammation in lungs using inhaled corticosteroids and adherence to prescribed treatment. If a patient needs to frequently use reliever inhalers, it indicates poor asthma control. Now, there are more effective inhalers that can be used as both maintenance and reliever treatment ensuring that the patients receive anti-inflammatory care even when used at the time of symptoms," Dr. Reddy added.

The latest recommendations from the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA, 2026), also emphasise a shift away from reliever-only (SABA) treatment towards inhaled corticosteroid (ICS)-based therapy for better asthma control.

## Need PF money fast? EPFO may soon let you withdraw funds through UPI

Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Tuesday that the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has completed testing for a facility that would allow members to withdraw their Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) using the UPI payment gateway.

Waiting for your PF money could soon become much faster and easier. Instead of filing claims and waiting days for processing, EPFO subscribers may soon be able to transfer

their provident fund money directly to their bank accounts using UPI.

The government says testing for this new feature has already been completed, and if all goes as planned, lakhs of employees could soon access their EPF savings with just a few taps on their phones.

### EPFO TESTING UPI-BASED PF WITHDRAWALS

Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Tuesday that the Employees' Provident



Fund Organisation (EPFO) has completed testing for a facility that would allow members to withdraw their Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) using the UPI payment gateway. Speaking to reporters, the minister said the withdrawn

amount will be transferred directly to a subscriber's bank account. The move is part of EPFO's efforts to improve service delivery and make access to funds simpler for members. At present, EPFO subscribers usually need to file withdrawal claims to access their PF money, a process many find slow and paperwork-heavy.

### HOW THE NEW UPI FACILITY MAY WORK

Under the proposed system, a certain portion of an EPF account is expected to remain

frozen, while a large part of the balance could be made available for withdrawal through UPI-linked bank accounts. Subscribers will reportedly be able to view the amount eligible for withdrawal in their seeded bank accounts. To complete the transfer, members may simply use their linked UPI PIN, adding an extra layer of security to the transaction. Once the money reaches the bank account, members can use it freely, whether for digital payments, transfers, or cash withdrawals

through ATMs.

### A BIG RELIEF FOR OVER SEVEN CRORE EPFO MEMBERS

The new system could benefit more than seven crore EPFO members across India. EPFO has reportedly been working to fix software-related issues to ensure the smooth rollout of the facility. For many salaried employees, quicker access to PF money could prove useful during emergencies or major life events, especially when immediate funds are needed.

## Strand Life Sciences Launches South Asia's First Olink

BENGALURU, 20 MAY 2026

Strand Life Sciences, a subsidiary of Reliance Industries Limited, today announced the launch of its advanced proteomics capabilities, powered by Olink™ Explore HT, marking a key milestone in expanding large-scale multi-omics research in India and South Asia. Every living cell produces thousands of proteins — the molecular machines that carry out virtually every biological function in the body, from fighting infection to regulating metabolism. Proteomics is the large-scale study of these proteins: what they are, how many are present, and how their levels shift in health and disease. It tells us what is actually being built and in what

quantities — making it one of the most direct windows into the biology of disease. Next-generation proteomics platforms have enabled the simultaneous analysis of thousands of proteins from a single, small blood sample. The result is a richer, faster, and far more actionable picture of disease biology — one that supports more precise treatment selection, and the discovery of new drug targets. As part of this milestone, Strand has successfully completed a proteomics project for a biopharma partner, involving patients with chronic kidney disease, demonstrating the platform's potential in translational research and clinical studies. Olink Explore HT enables the measurement of over 5,400 protein biomarkers from just 2 µL of sample —

roughly one-twentieth of a single drop of blood — allowing Strand to deliver integrated proteomics, genomics, and clinical insights for advanced research and drug discovery.

For pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, this capability represents a transformational change. Research programmes that once required time intensive sequential investigation can now be compressed into integrated, large-scale studies.

For clinicians and patients, the promise is equally significant. Biomarkers identified through proteomics can guide treatment decisions with greater confidence and open new frontiers in precision medicine. Dr Ramesh Hariharan, CEO, Strand Life Sciences, said: "With Olink™ Explore HT, Strand is bring-

ing one of the world's most advanced proteomics platforms to India and the region. By combining this with established strengths in genomics, bioinformatics, and clinical partnerships, Strand aims to deliver end-to-end multi-omics programmes and enable faster, more impactful discovery. We welcome collaborations with global pharma and biotech partners to accelerate research and development pipelines." Strand can now support the generation of large, multi-modal datasets across diverse and clinically relevant populations in India, broader South Asia, and West Asia. Through its extensive network of clinical partners, the company enables studies across multiple therapeutic areas, including oncology, nephrology, metabolic diseases,

and rare disorders.

With this launch, Strand is engaging with global academic, pharmaceutical, and biotechnology organisations seeking to conduct discovery, validation, and translational research programmes at scale, and is offering: Access to over 5,400 protein biomarkers through Olink Explore HT Seamless integration with genomics and clinical datasets End-to-end support — from study design to data analysis and interpretation Proven expertise in executing large cohort-based studies in diverse populations As global demand for integrated multi-omics data continues to grow, Strand's early adoption of Olink™ Explore HT positions it as a preferred partner for high-impact discovery programmes.

## Gold loans surge 50% in FY26: Why more Indians are borrowing against gold

Need money urgently but do not want the hassle of lengthy paperwork? Many Indians are increasingly turning to gold loans as a quick and easier way to raise funds, especially at a time when gold prices remain strong. When money gets tight, many Indians are increasingly turning to something already sitting safely at home, i.e., gold jewellery. Whether it is for medical needs, business expenses, education or simply quick access to cash, borrowing against gold is becoming a popular choice. The trend has picked up sharply over the past year. Gold loans emerged as the fastest-growing retail credit segment in FY26, helped by rising gold prices and growing demand for secured borrowing, according to 'How India

Lends - Credit Landscape in India', a report released by CRIF High Mark.

### GOLD LOANS LEAD THE LENDING RACE

The report found that gold loans saw the strongest growth among all retail lending products in the fourth quarter of FY26. Outstanding gold loan portfolios rose 50.4% year-on-year to reach Rs 18.6 lakh crore. This made gold loans the fastest-growing category in India's retail credit market. Experts believe one big reason behind the surge is the steady rise in gold prices. Since the value of pledged gold has gone up, borrowers are able to get bigger loans for the same jewellery. For lenders too, gold-backed loans are seen as safer because they are secured by a physical asset.

The report also noted that asset quality in the gold loan segment improved, suggesting that borrowers are managing repayments better even as demand rises.

### WHY ARE MORE PEOPLE CHOOSING GOLD LOANS?

Unlike some other loans that may require lengthy paperwork or strict income checks, gold loans are often quicker to access. For many households, gold acts as a financial safety net during emergencies. Instead of selling jewellery, people can pledge it temporarily and borrow money when needed. The report suggests that this demand remained strong in FY26, supported by favourable market conditions and higher collateral values.

**But a third XRISM study, also published in 2025, hinted that all was not entirely calm. Researchers at that point had detected cooler pockets of gas embedded within the hotter cluster atmosphere — possible leftovers, they said, from ancient "sloshing" motions triggered by a long-ago collision.**

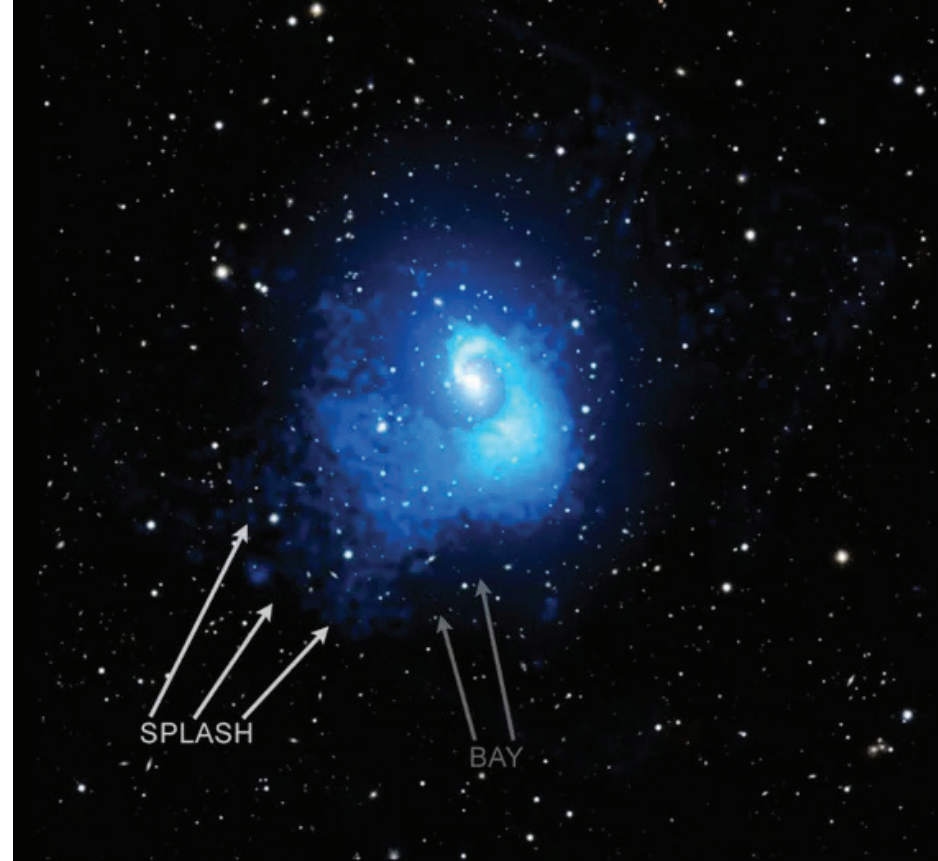
The new Chandra X-ray Observatory observations add fresh evidence to that more turbulent history, revealing that — like ripples lingering long after a stone strikes water — the scars etched into Abell 2029's superheated gas continue to tell the story of a violent cosmic encounter billions of years ago.

Using 21 new X-ray observations collected in 2022 and 2023, along with archival data gathered earlier, Watson and her colleagues traced enormous structures hidden within the cluster's hot gas, including one of the longest continuous "sloshing spirals" ever observed, the study reports. The spiral stretches nearly 2 million light-years from the cluster's center. The observations also revealed a concave "bay"-like depression south of the cluster core, a broad "splash" of cooler gas

extending southeastward, and evidence of a possible shock wave propagating through the cluster outskirts, according to the paper. To uncover the array of hidden substructures, the team used image-processing techniques that removed the cluster's otherwise smooth and symmetrical X-ray glow. Computer simulations that then traced the cluster's history suggest the structures likely formed after a smaller galaxy cluster plunged through Abell 2029 billions of years ago, the study notes. That collision would have displaced the hot gas, causing it to oscillate and swirl through the cluster's gravitational field, "similar to how wine moves in a wine glass," the statement read. The study suggests those giant sloshing motions may help regulate how the cluster cools over time by redistributing heat through the intracluster gas, alongside energy injected by the active supermassive black hole at the center of IC 1101, which is one of the most massive known to date. That matters because the gas inside galaxy clusters constantly radiates energy away in X-rays and should gradually cool over time, and scientists suspect energy released by supermassive black holes, known as AGN feedback, helps reheat that gas and prevent runaway cooling. But the new findings suggest black hole activity alone may not fully explain what is happening in Abell 2029, and that the large-scale sloshing

caused by the ancient merger may also play an important role in stirring and heating the gas, the new study notes. Meanwhile, the splash feature of cooler gas may trace a wake of material left behind after the smaller cluster made a second pass through Abell 2029, the study suggests. Simulations indicate the smaller cluster initially swept through the larger one, dragging gas sideways and generating the enormous spiral. Gravity from the larger cluster would have then slowed the smaller object and pulled it back for another encounter, producing shock fronts and additional disturbances in the gas. The bay structure may represent overlapping gas flows where the outer edge of the spiral intersects with material stripped from the smaller cluster during the collision, according to the study. Alternatively, the study notes, the bay feature could be associated with the edge of a giant "ghost bubble" — an ancient cavity carved into the gas by activity from the supermassive black hole at the center of IC 1101.

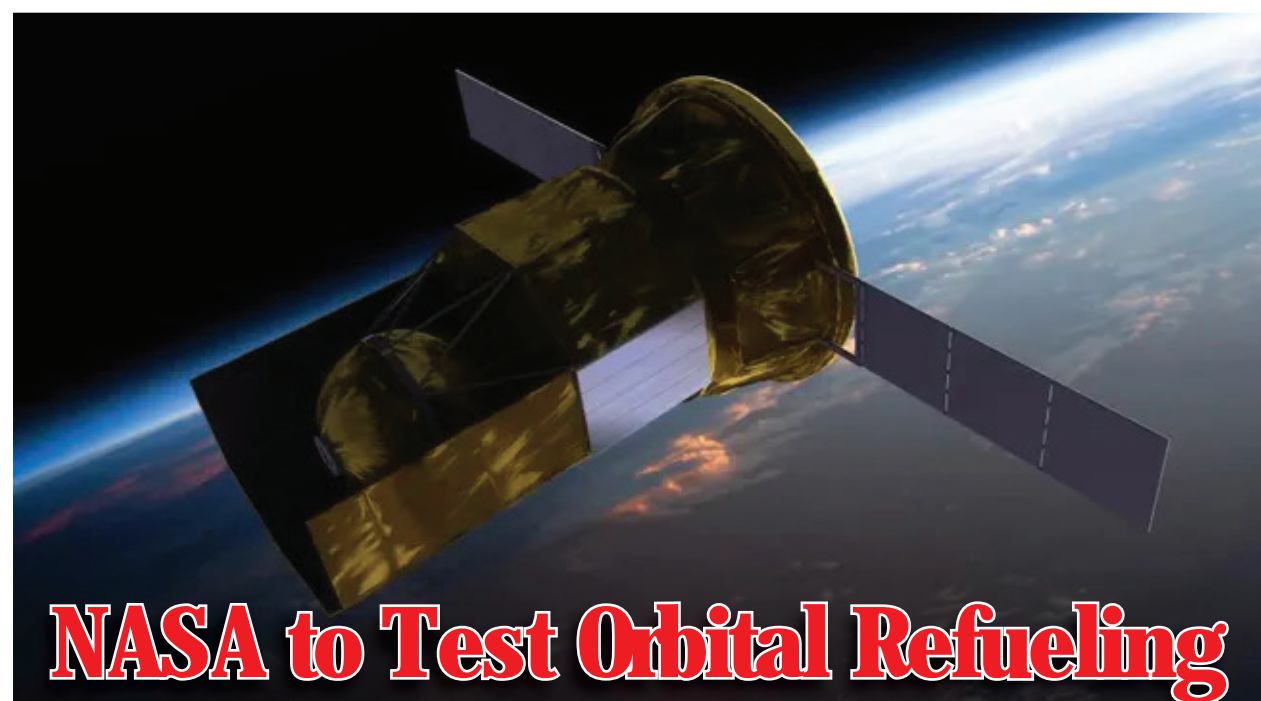
Although Watson and her colleagues found no clear evidence of previously undiscovered radio bubbles in the cluster gas, they note that projection effects could make such structures difficult to detect if they are partially aligned along our line of sight. This research is described in a paper published December 2025 in *The Astrophysical Journal*.



## Study Reveals Violent Past of Universe's 'Most Relaxed' Galaxy Cluster

For decades, astronomers have described the galaxy cluster Abell 2029, a vast city of galaxies in the Virgo constellation, as "the most relaxed clusters in the universe." But beneath that placid exterior, scientists have now found, the cluster is still reverberating from an ancient cosmic collision. New observations from the Chandra X-ray Observatory suggest giant "sloshing" motions in the cluster's gas — triggered by a merger roughly 4 billion years ago — may help heat the cluster alongside energy released by the supermassive black hole at its center. That could help explain why the gas in galaxy clusters does not cool as quickly as expected, the researchers say. But of note, Chandra's new data also revealed massive substructures still visible today, including gigantic spirals, shock fronts and waves of superheated gas rippling through the cluster, according to a statement released last week by Chandra X-ray Observatory. "Overall, our results suggest that A2029 is still settling from past interactions,"

a team of researchers led by astrophysicist Courtney Watson of Boston University write in the new paper, "showing that even the initially most relaxed-looking clusters can be hiding a rich history of dynamical activity." Hosting more than a thousand galaxies, Abell 2029 is among the largest known galaxy clusters, which are sprawling collections of galaxies bound together by gravity and immersed in enormous clouds of heated gas. At its center sits IC 1101, a colossal elliptical galaxy estimated to span nearly 6 million light-years across, making it one of the largest galaxies ever discovered. Astronomers have since the 1990s regarded Abell 2029 as unusually tranquil. Most recently, two studies published in 2025 using the XRISM observatory, which studies the universe in X-ray light, found extremely low levels of turbulence in the superheated gas filling the space between galaxies, suggesting the cluster had not experienced a recent major disruptive interaction such as a merger.



## NASA to Test Orbital Refueling Tech for Deep Space Missions

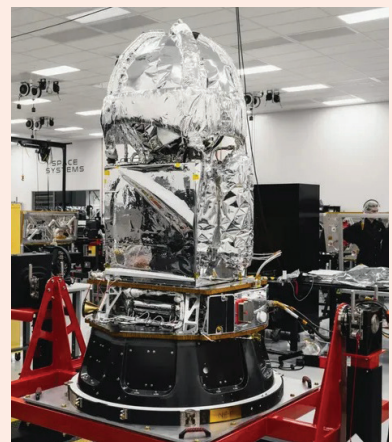
A new NASA satellite will test critical technologies for storing and transferring super-chilled, cryogenic fuels in space in order to help astronauts reach the moon and potentially Mars someday. The Liquid Oxygen Flight demonstration (LOXSAT) will launch to orbit around the Earth later this year to test the fluid management capabilities that will be needed to maintain cryogenic fuels in microgravity, which come with additional challenges compared to other propellants. In a statement, NASA said these in-space propellant depots could some day be "essentially gas stations in space that could support long-term exploration." LOXSAT will head to low Earth orbit (LEO) this summer aboard a Rocket Lab Photon satellite bus, hitching a ride on an Electron launch vehicle, from

the company's facilities in New Zealand no earlier than July 17, according to NASA's statement. The mission is set to last for nine months, and will conduct tests on 11 different components of cryogenic fluid management to collect data to mature the technologies for scaling. Cryogenic fuels must be managed with tight temperature controls to prevent them from boiling off, whether on Earth or in space. The same temperature conditions that make those liquids hard to store also make them hard to transfer, and the ability to do so between vehicles in space is a crucial step to unlocking missions to deep space, like those of NASA's Artemis program to return astronauts to the moon and other exploration efforts such as crewed missions to Mars. The mission is a collaboration with Eta Space

of Rockledge, Florida, and NASA hopes the technology can evolve to support on-orbit refueling depots for spacecraft designed for long-term deep space objectives. It's central to the success of the agency's upcoming lunar goals, and part of a larger Cryogenic Fluid Management Portfolio Project involving scientists and engineers from NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, Glenn Research Center, and Kennedy Space Center (KSC). Eta Space was selected under NASA's Tipping Point initiative, which chose 14 companies to develop a variety of technologies to support the Artemis program's goal of sustained operations on the surface of the moon by 2030. Managing cryogenic fuels in space is a critical part of that architecture. Both Artemis lunar landers commissioned under NASA's Human Land-

ing System contracts rely on cryogenic propellants, and require on-orbit refueling in order to complete their missions of landing astronauts on the lunar surface and delivering them back to lunar orbit. Both landers also use liquid oxygen as the oxidizer for their respective propellants. SpaceX's Starship is powered by a mixture of liquid oxygen and liquid methane (methalox). The other, Blue Origin's Blue Moon lander, is powered by liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen (hydrolox) — both of which require constant cryogenic refrigeration to maintain their liquid state. Neither landers (or any other spacecraft, to date) have yet demonstrated how they will handle long-term storage of those super-chilled fuels, or the ability to transfer them between vehicles. That means LOXSAT may be the first.

gressing towards launch readiness, but the company's New Glenn rocket is currently grounded due to a mishap with its second stage during its most recent mission, which failed to deliver its payload to orbit. MK1 is a cargo variant of the crewed lander Blue Origin plans to use for NASA's Artemis missions, and



is scheduled to perform a lunar landing demonstration later this year, pending the completion of the FAA's investigation into New Glenn's previous failure. NASA is targeting late 2027 for the Artemis 3 mission, which will launch four astronauts to LEO to practice rendezvous and docking maneuvers between their Orion spacecraft and one or both of the program's lunar landers. NASA has indicated the agency will fly with whichever is ready when it comes time to launch the mission, even if that means leaving one behind on Earth. By then, LOXSAT will have completed its own on-orbit demonstrations, and, if all goes according to plan, provided scientists and engineers useful data that could potentially inform SpaceX's and Blue Origin's efforts to achieve cryogenic fuel management in microgravity, and eventually lead to orbital refueling stations that can support Artemis and other missions to the moon, Mars and other deep space destinations.

## Scientists propose new way to find aliens

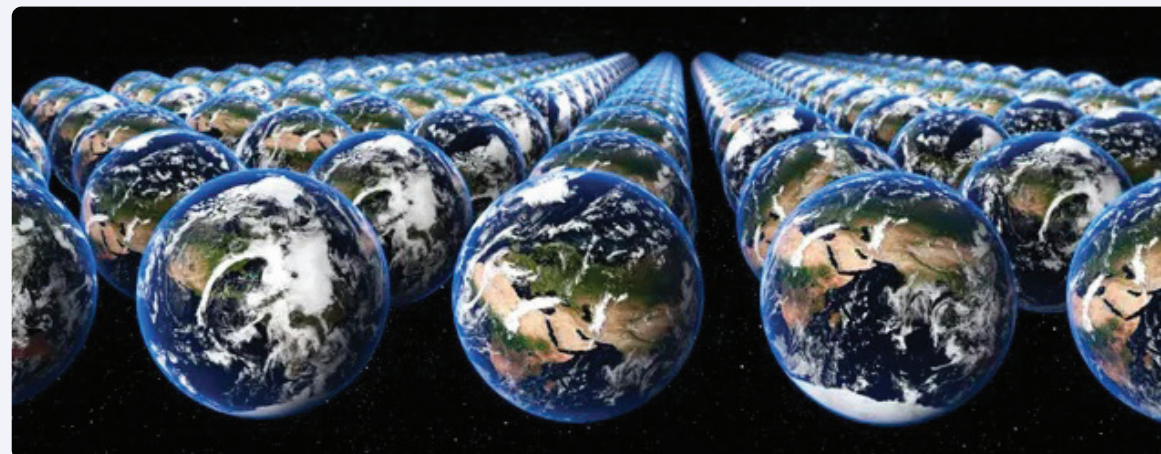
and we may already have a spacecraft that can help

Researchers may have just revealed a new way of looking for alien life — it's based on the idea that it isn't just the type of biosignatures that are important, but also how they are organized. "Our approach could help make the search for life more efficient. If a molecular assemblage shows no life-like organization, that may make it a lower priority target," Fabian Klenner of the University of California, Riverside told Space.com.

Let's break down the concept. First, it should be noted that life uses and produces a range of biologically useful materials such as amino acids, peptides, proteins, fatty acids and so forth. These compounds are therefore considered potential "biosignatures" — if we find them on another world, it is quite possible that they have been produced by life's processes (life as we know it, at least). However, these compounds are not exclusively biological — abiotic chemical reactions that have no connection to biology can also produce them, and distinguishing between the two possible sources is one of astrobiology's greatest challenges. For example, methane plumes on Mars could be biological or geological in origin, and the same uncertainty also clouds the detection of phosphine in Venus' atmosphere, or the potential discovery of dimethyl sulfide (DMS) in the atmosphere of the exoplanet K2-18b.

This sows confusion because detecting biosignatures does not necessarily mean we have detected life. However, Klenner is part of a team led by Gideon Yoffe of the Weizmann Institute in Israel that showed there may be a way to distinguish between biological and abiotic origins. To do so, they took a leaf out of ecologists' book, where life is measured by two metrics: its diversity and how evenly spread its distribution is. They focused on two biological compounds: amino acids and fatty acids. Amino acids form long chains called peptides that assemble into proteins that are the workhorses inside biological cells. Fatty acids form part of the structure of those cells. Both can be produced by life or by non-living processes. "We focused on amino acids and fatty acids because they are central molecular classes for life as we know it and because suitable datasets exist," said Klenner. Indeed, Yoffe and Klenner's team were able to delve into about 100 datasets including samples from asteroids, fossils, meteorites, microbes, soils and synthetic laboratory samples. They showed that amino acids are more diverse and more evenly distributed when they are created by living organisms than when produced by non-living processes. Fatty acids are the other way around — they are less diverse

and less evenly distributed when created by biology. This is not a foolproof method of detecting life, warn the researchers. First of all, they have only shown that it works with amino acids and fatty acids. "In principle, similar organizational trends may exist for other molecular classes but this still needs to be tested," said Klenner. Second, the diversity and distribution of these bio-compounds needs to be placed into context with other molecules, otherwise it is impossible to say how diverse and evenly distributed they really are. This means that it cannot be applied to the DMS detection on K2-18b, as we simply don't know enough about that exoplanet's atmosphere to quantify the diversity and distribution. "For a single molecule like DMS, the situation is different," said Klenner. "For K2-18b, DMS alone would not be enough for our analysis — we'd need a broader inventory of related molecules." However, the technique may be more useful closer to home, in our solar system, where samples and datasets are more complete. One useful facet of the research is that the organizational patterns hold up no matter how degraded the biological sample is. For example, fossilized dinosaur eggs retained traces of the distribution and diversity of amino acids and fatty acids. This could come in useful for Mars, where astrobiologists are searching for evidence of life on the Red Planet from billions of years ago when Mars was warmer and wetter. "Biological samples do not simply become meaningless once they degrade," said Klenner. "Some organizational information can persist, which makes this approach useful for ancient Mars." The technique on its own cannot confirm the existence of life — in general, the discovery of alien life would be such a profound revelation that we would need multiple lines of evidence to be absolutely sure. It can, however, direct us towards the best places to look. One of those places may be Jupiter's moon Europa, which harbors a global ocean of water beneath a thick shell of ice. Astrobiologists are undecided as to whether that ocean is capable of supporting life or not. While NASA's forthcoming Europa Clipper mission, currently on its way to Jupiter to arrive in 2031, won't be able to look under the ice, it will be able to study possible locations where the ocean has erupted onto the surface. "One of the instruments on board Clipper, the Surface Dust Analyzer, will be able to measure the abundance ratios of organic molecules in ice grains emitted from Europa," said Klenner. "If families of organic molecules are detected, then our diversity based approach will help interpret whether these molecules look more consistent with abiotic chemistry or biological organization."





## Pandey, Powell, and bowlers keep KKR's playoffs hope alive

KOLKATA

Manish Pandey and Rovman Powell played key roles under pressure as Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) beat Mumbai Indians (MI) by four wickets in Match 65 of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 at Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Wednesday, keeping alive their hopes of reaching the playoffs stage.

Chasing a target of 148 on a tricky two-paced surface, KKR faced a few tense moments but crossed the finish line thanks mainly to Pandey's steady 45 off 33 balls and Powell's bold batting in the middle overs.

KKR started their innings aggressively despite an early loss. Impact substitute Finn Allen, who replaced injured Varun Chakravarty, hit two clean square-driven boundaries off Deepak Chahar before dragging the last ball of the opening over into his stumps. KKR was 10/1 after one over.

Jasprit Bumrah then delivered an excellent second over in which Ajinkya Rahane and Pandey faced only two balls combined, illustrating the tough batting conditions.

However, Rahane quickly found his groove as KKR picked up the pace. Bumrah had an unusually expensive fourth over, with Rahane and Pandey both hitting boundaries to move KKR to 31/1 after four overs.

Mumbai Indians made a brief comeback when Corbin Bosch dismissed Rahane for 21 off 17 balls in the final over of the Power-play. After giving away nine runs on the first three balls, Bosch adjusted his length brilliantly to induce an outside edge, catching Rahane off guard. KKR finished the Power-play at 48/2.

The hosts faced another setback in the eighth over when Cameron Green mishit a poor delivery down the leg side from Allah Ghazanfar straight to a fielder, scoring only four runs off eight balls. At 54/3, Mumbai sensed an opportunity. Pandey, however, expertly stabilised the innings while Powell shifted the momentum with a series of



powerful shots. Powell almost got out in the 10th over when Deepak Chahar let a top-edged hook shot slip through for Robin Minz at fine leg, but the chance was missed amid confusion.

Meanwhile, Pandey kept the innings flowing by rotating the strike and punishing loose balls. He reached 45 before Bumrah finally got him out for the first time in T20 cricket after 49 balls in their matchups. Bumrah bowled a fantastic offcut with the 15-over-old ball that sharply moved back through bat and pad.

Earlier, KKR's bowlers set the stage for victory by limiting the Mumbai Indians to a modest 147/8 in 20 overs. Cameron Green and Saurabh Dubey dismantled Mumbai's top-order batter on a challenging pitch. Green removed Naman Dhir for a three-ball duck and then took an incredible over-the-shoulder catch to dismiss Rohit Sharma for 15.

Dubey also struck twice during the Power-play, including the wicket of Suryakumar Yadav for 15, as Mumbai fell to 46/4 after six overs.

After a rain delay at 57/4 in eight overs, KKR's spin pair of Sunil Narine and Varun Chakravarty tightened their grip on the game. Narine bowled exceptionally well, finishing with 4-1-13-1 by taking out Hardik Pandya for 26, while Varun delivered 4-0-28-0

despite having a hairline fracture in his foot.

Tilak Varma struggled with his rhythm, scoring 20 off 32 balls before Kartik Tyagi dismissed him with a bouncer. Will Jacks was run out for 13 after a mix-up with Bosch. Late hitting from Bosch and Chahar helped Mumbai recover a bit, with Bosch hitting back-to-back sixes in the final overs, allowing MI to gather 52 runs in the last four overs for a total of 147/8. However, that total ultimately proved too low.

Even after Pandey's wicket, Powell (40) continued to attack, hitting Ghazanfar for a huge six over long-on. But Bosch shone again in the field, diving to his right at backward point to take a stunning catch, dismissing Powell just as the game seemed secure for KKR.

Despite losing wickets late in the game, KKR crossed the finish line with four wickets in hand as Rinku Singh hit the final runs with a boundary over long-on, keeping their playoff aspirations alive.

### Brief scores

Mumbai Indians 147/8 in 20 overs (Corbin Bosch 32 not out, Hardik Pandya 26; Cameron Green 2-23, Saurabh Debey 2-34) lost to Kolkata Knight Riders 148/6 in 18.5 overs (Manish Pandey 45, Rovman Powell 40; Corbin Bosch 3-40) by four wickets.

## Mohun Bagan SG look to keep their end of the bargain against SC Delhi

KOLKATA

Mohun Bagan Super Giant prepare for one final push for the title when they take on Sporting Club Delhi in the Indian Super League title race on a scorching summer night at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan in Kolkata on Thursday night.

With five clubs - East Bengal, Mohun Bagan, Mumbai City FC, Punjab FC, and Jamshedpur FC - still mathematically in contention heading into the last round of fixtures, the ISL 2026 season is set for a dramatic finish. Mohun Bagan know the equation is no longer entirely in their control, but the defending champions remain alive in the race for a historic third consecutive league crown.

The Mariners currently sit second in the table with 23 points from 12 matches, level with arch-rivals East Bengal but behind on goal difference. The Red-and-Gold Brigade's goal difference is 18 compared to Bagan's 13. Sergio Lobera's side must first defeat Sporting Club Delhi and then hope East Bengal either drop points against Inter Kashi or fail to maintain their superior goal difference.

There is another route too. If both Kolkata clubs win, Mohun Bagan would require a 6-0 margin of victory combined with a 1-0 East Bengal win to overturn the goal difference deficit. A draw could also be enough if East Bengal lose and the Mumbai City FC versus Punjab FC clash ends level.

Despite the complicated permutations, Lobera insisted his players are focused only on the task in front of them. "We need to believe. To be honest, we are not in the scenario we wanted to be in, but there are



still options. When there are options, we need to fight for them. We need to prepare well for the game, and we need to win," the Spaniard said.

The Mohun Bagan coach confirmed that midfielder Lalengmawia Ralte, popularly known as Apuia, is unlikely to feature, while Jason Cummings remains doubtful. "About Apuia, most probably he is not going to play because he is not fit for tomorrow's game. About Jason, we will try in the last training session. It will be difficult, but not impossible. Maybe he can play," Lobera revealed.

Lobera also acknowledged that goal difference could ultimately decide the championship. "The most important thing is to win the game, but it is also in our hands if we can score enough goals. It is not easy, but it is not impossible either," he said. "If we think this is going to be an easy game and that we are automatically going to score goals, then we are making a big mistake. We need to respect the opponent."

Mohun Bagan will once again rely heavily on Dimitri Petratos and Jamie Maclaren in attack. Petratos said the squad remains fully motivated despite the pressure surrounding the final day. "We just have

to go out there and give everything, focus on ourselves, and do our best. We will stick to the plan and go for it," the Australian said. "The motivation is obviously high. We have an opportunity to go out there and win the league," he added. "Anything is possible. It is all about having a positive mindset. You never know what can happen in football." Sporting Club Delhi, meanwhile, arrive with little pressure but plenty of determination to spoil Mohun Bagan's title hopes. Head coach Tomasz Tchorz believes his team can compete against the defending champions.

"We obviously want to win and try to finish in a better position," Tchorz said. "We know Mohun Bagan need to win, and it will be a tough competition. But we have a mix of young and experienced players, we are disciplined, and we have trained hard... Everyone is motivated for the match. I think it is possible to beat Mohun Bagan. The game will be open, and we will go for a win." With Kolkata sweating through one of its hottest weeks of the year, the stage is perfectly set for a tense and emotionally charged final night where every goal could reshape the destiny of the ISL trophy.

## Perez could face his first presidential election rival at Real Madrid since 2009



MADRID

Real Madrid appears set to have more than one candidate in its presidential election for the first time since 2009, after Enrique Riquelme implied he would stand against incumbent president Florentino Perez, despite admitting he had been caught off guard by Perez's decision to call elections last week.

Perez, 79, called the election just 16 months after being re-elected for a fourth term since returning to power in 2009. Since then, no rival candidate has emerged, partly because of the strict requirements imposed on challengers.

Potential candidates must be Spanish, have been club members for at least 20 years, and provide a bank guarantee worth 15 percent of the club's annual budget, estimated at around 215 million U.S. dollars, reports Xinhua.

Riquelme, president of a re-

newable energy company, fulfilled those requirements and acknowledged on Wednesday that Perez's decision had disrupted his plans.

"We didn't have a plan for today," Riquelme admitted, adding that he had been "working on a strategy for 2028 for some time, but the elections have been brought forward by three years." Perez's decision has left Riquelme with just 10 days to secure the bank guarantee and formally submit his candidacy. "We know these are the rules, and we have no right to complain, but they've only given us a few days," he said.

Despite the short timeframe, Riquelme argued he felt compelled to challenge Perez. "There is a moral and ethical obligation for us to step forward and present something meaningful, something inspiring. These could be the last elections at Real Madrid, because privatisation is coming," he said.

## 'It was for my mother': Sooryavanshi reveals reason behind unique half-century celebration

JAIPUR

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi revealed that the special hand gesture he made after reaching his half-century during Rajasthan Royals' thrilling seven-wicket win over Lucknow Super Giants was dedicated to his mother, saying the emotional celebration was personal because her name starts with the letter "A".

The young opener played one of the finest knocks of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, smashing a breathtaking 93 off just 38 balls to power RR to a stunning chase of 221

at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium. His innings, laced with 10 sixes, helped keep RR alive in the playoff race.

Speaking after the match, Sooryavanshi finally explained the meaning behind the now-viral celebration he made after completing his fifty. "I dedicated it to my mother. I didn't want to tell everyone because this is personal. Actually, it was for her. Her name starts with A, so I made it," he said in a video released by Rajasthan Royals on X.

The youngster also admitted that he felt pressure early in the chase after a slow start, but said advice from



opening partner Yashasvi Jaiswal helped him stay calm. "When I got 2-3 balls, I started feeling a bit of pressure. But Yashasvi Bhaiya said, 'You play 10 overs. Till then,

they will be on the back foot. You don't take tension in the game. The score can be covered at any time," Sooryavanshi said.

Despite his aggressive reputation, the left-hander looked unusually composed during the chase and said it was a conscious decision because of the importance of the match. "It was a very important game. It was a challenge for the team. I wanted to keep playing until the game was over. Otherwise, the game would have been over earlier. But I will try to finish the game next time as well with this mindset," he said.

Sooryavanshi also revealed a conversation he had with RR coach Kumar Sangakkara before the chase, saying he could sense pressure in the dressing room after the team's recent defeats. "We were not doing well in the last three matches. Even today, when the score was 220, I could see he was under tension. But I was confident that if I backed my game, it would be done," he said.

Sooryavanshi also termed the knock as more valuable than even a century because of the context of the game and RR's playoff situation. "It was a very special knock.

## Tejasvi Singh replaces injured Raghuvanshi as concussion substitute

KOLKATA

Kolkata Knight Riders had to make a concussion substitution during their important match in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 against Mumbai Indians after in-form batter and stand-in wicket-keeper Angkrish Raghuvanshi injured his hand in a field collision.

KKR replaced Raghuvanshi with Tejasvi Singh for the run chase in match 65 on Wednesday. "Ramandeep Singh has replaced Angkrish Raghuvanshi as a concussion substitute," KKR posted on X. The incident happened during the 11th over of the Mumbai Indians' innings at Eden Gardens. Tilak Varma top-edged a delivery from spinner Varun Chakravarty high



into the air. Both Raghuvanshi and Chakravarty ran for the catch and collided awkwardly, which allowed Tilak to escape. Raghuvanshi seemed to hurt his hand and left the field shortly after. Initially, KKR put Tejasvi Singh in as the substitute wicketkeeper for the rest of the innings. They later officially named Ramandeep as the concussion replacement during the chase. This injury raises con-

cerns for KKR, which came into the match needing wins in their last games to keep their playoff chances alive. Raghuvanshi has been a key player for the team this season, scoring 422 runs in 12 innings at an average of 42.20 and a strike rate of 146.52. The 22-year-old has also hit five half-centuries, including three in his last four innings, making him one of KKR's most dependable batters in the middle order. Ramandeep has had a tough time finding consistency this season. Before losing his spot in the XI last month, the all-rounder scored only 82 runs in six innings. As the tournament reaches its final stages, KKR hopes Raghuvanshi's injury is not serious enough to keep one of their key players sidelined.

## Gough believes McCullum 'very lucky' to keep England coach job

LONDON

Former England fast bowler Darren Gough has said head coach Brendon McCullum was 'very lucky' to retain his job as the head coach after the 4-1 debacle in the Ashes, while admitting he was 'disheartened' on missing out on the role of national selector.

Gough, who claimed 467 international wickets and previously served as Yorkshire's managing director of cricket, missed out on becoming England's new national selector, with the role going to former Australia batter Marcus



North. North, who played 21 Tests for Australia, was appointed to the role by Rob Key, managing director of men's cricket at the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), ahead of other candidates, including Gough and Steven

Finn, as the replacement for Luke Wright.

"I think Baz McCullum is realistically very lucky to carry on as England's head coach. If you're not winning games, your job is going to come under scrutiny. It's a four-year

cycle, so if you go to Australia on the fourth year of it and you win, or you get really close, you can say there's been a big change, and let's give it another couple of years.

"It didn't happen, but I wish them the best of luck. I like the way they play, but it needs to be toned down a bit. We need a bit of steel, and I'd like to think we'll see that this summer," Gough told The Overlap's Stick to Cricket show.

Asked if McCullum, the former New Zealand skipper, would face increased scrutiny this season, Gough replied in the affirmative. "Absolutely.

They're under pressure, and they should be, I don't think there's any doubt about that."

Quizzed on sadness over losing out to North in the race to be England's chief selector, Gough stated, "I was disheartened. I'll be honest, it did hurt me. I could have challenged them in the right areas. I'm mature now, I'm not like I was 10 years ago, a hothead. I've mellowed a lot, and I've managed people." "My honest opinion was, if they went down the route of someone who'd played for England, who has done all the roles in the game, I might just get this.

## ISL 2025-26: Punjab FC, Jamshedpur FC and Mumbai City FC battle for glory

NEW DELHI/JAMSHEDPUR

The Indian Super League (ISL) 2025-26 season stands on the edge of its defining night with three top sides -- Punjab FC, Jamshedpur FC, and Mumbai City FC -- getting into action with a lot at stake in deciding the outcome of the league.

On Thursday, as the final round unfolds simultaneously across the country, ambition, pressure, and possibility will collide under the lights in New Delhi and Jamshedpur, where the title race could twist and transform with every passing minute.

For Punjab FC, Mumbai City FC, and Jamshedpur FC, the margins are extremely fine. Months of consistent performance have brought them to within touching distance of the summit, yet one lapse on the final evening could render their title hope unsuccessful.

At the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi, Punjab FC and Mumbai City FC face each



other in a contest carrying the intensity of a knockout encounter and the consequence of a title decider. Locked level on 22 points, both clubs enter the night with the same understanding -- they must win to stay in contention for the title. Anything less could extinguish their hopes before the final whistle has even sounded elsewhere.

Punjab arrive after a dramatic 3-2 triumph over Odisha FC, while Mumbai City carry the momentum of their own following a commanding 4-0 victory

against Mohammedan SC. Yet form alone may count for little on a night where results across stadiums could reshape the standings quickly. Further east, at the JRD Tata Sports Complex, Jamshedpur FC prepare for a night with slim but realistic hope. Their path to the title is the narrowest of the contenders still standing, but not impossible. First, they must overcome Odisha FC. Then comes the waiting as events in Kolkata and New Delhi shape the destiny of the league crown.

## Mohun Bagan, Kerala Blasters among clubs denied AIFP Premier I licence

NEW DELHI

Several prominent Indian football clubs, including Mohun Bagan Super Giant, Kerala Blasters FC, and Odisha FC, have had their applications rejected by the All India Football Federation (AIFP) for the Premier I Club Licence for the 2026-27 season. The AIFP's

Club Licensing Committee, First Instance Body (CLC-FIB), met on May 17 and announced that licenses were rejected for Sporting Club Delhi, Odisha FC, Mohun Bagan Super Giant, Chennaiyin FC, Kerala Blasters FC, Mohammedan Sporting Club, and Inter Kashi. The governing body clarified that these clubs can appeal the decision

or seek an exemption to participate in national competitions under the applicable regulations. In an official statement, the AIFP stated that the clubs whose applications have been rejected can either appeal the decision or request an exemption to take part in the national club competition, according to the licensing regulations.

## Ritika Radiates Confidence and Grace in Glam Look

In a stunning new photoshoot, rising Telugu star Ritika Nayak perfectly embodies "Main character energy, always". Captured in an elegant white corset-style dress under warm golden lighting, with credits to photographer @sujana.zip, stylist @shefalideora\_outfit @wearerceil, accessories @kaimaa.in, and makeup & hair @cynthia\_glamhouse, the image radiates confidence, grace, and star power.

acclaimed Hi Nanna (2023) alongside Nani and Mrunal Thakur.

Her career reached new heights in 2025 with the fantasy-action film Mirai opposite Teja Sajja, where she played Vibha and delivered a powerful performance in a high-budget pan-Indian project. As of 2026, Ritika has exciting ongoing projects including the Indo-Korean film Korean Kanakaraju, bilingual Duet, and other films with prominent actors like Anand Deverakonda.

With her natural acting talent and striking screen presence, Ritika Nayak is undoubtedly one of the most promising young talents in Telugu cinema.



## Why Is NTR Named Luger?

The moment the glimpse of Dragon dropped, many started wondering about the character name of Jr. NTR in the film. Director Prashanth Neel has named the star hero as Luger, and social media instantly went into decoding mode. Because this doesn't sound like a regular commercial cinema hero name at all. At first, looking at heroine Rukmini Vasanth's narrative in the glimpse video, about how God created things based on the Bible, m a n y

thought that Luger is a biblical name. However, it looks like Prashanth Neel picked a cold, sharp, almost dangerous-sounding word for the name of the hero, which is not even linked to any existing names. According to Google, "Luger" is actually the name of a famous German 9mm semi-automatic pistol. One of the most iconic weapons used during World War I & II by the German military. A gun known for precision, aggression, and deadly efficiency.

Now that completely changes the perception around the character. With Jr NTR playing the role of an assassin head in the Afghan Trading Company, inside the film Dragon, Luger was given to him as a symbolic identity. Maybe the character operates like the weapon itself, very silent, but explosive and deadly when triggered. Even Jr NTR's dialogue from the glimpse surrounds the same theme. Whatever the real meaning behind Luger is, one thing is clear. #NTRNeel has successfully triggered curiosity with just one word. And that itself is smart

On his birthday, Jr NTR delighted fans by introducing his two pet parrots, "Asahi" and "Yuuhi," through a heartwarming social media post. Along with the excitement surrounding the glimpse of his upcoming film Dragon, the actor shared adorable pictures with the colorful birds, which quickly went viral online. NTR revealed that the parrots' Japanese names reflect his deep admiration for Japan, a country that became very special to him after the massive success of RRR.

Fans loved seeing this soft and personal side of the actor and flooded social media with birthday wishes, heart emojis, and sweet comments. Many even called the parrots the "cutest birthday surprise" from NTR. After gaining huge popularity in Japan through RRR and receiving a warm welcome during his visits there, fans felt the names carried emotional meaning. While Dragon updates created huge buzz online, this cute gesture added a special touch to the celebrations.

## Kamal Haasan Hollywood Film Buzz With Shruti As Writer

Kamal Haasan may soon act in a Hollywood film, and reports say Shruti Haasan is in charge of writing the script. The news is not yet confirmed, but talk is strong that Shruti is pushing hard to get the project started. This could be Kamal Haasan's first full Hollywood movie. Shruti has already worked in an English film called The Eye with Mark Rowley. Now she may team up with her father for this big international project.

After finishing his campaign for the Tamil Nadu assembly elections with the DMK, Kamal Haasan is back to films. He is producing Rajinikanth's Thalaivar 173 with director Ciby Chakravarthi. He will also act with Rajinikanth after 40 years in a new film by director Nelson. Many thought his US trip was for his film KH 237 with stunt directors Anbariv. But new reports say the trip was linked to Shruti's Hollywood script.

Kamal Haasan has been active in learning new tech for films. He went to the US to study Artificial Intelligence and joined a 45 day course at a top institute. He also visited the Perplexity AI office in San Francisco and met CEO Aravind Srinivas to discuss how AI can help creative work.

On the film front, Kamal is part of Nag Ashwin's Kalki 2898 AD sequel with Prabhas and Amitabh Bachchan. Deepika Padukone will not return for the second part. While fans wait for an official word on the Hollywood film, the idea of Kamal Haasan and Shruti Haasan working together has created a lot of excitement online.



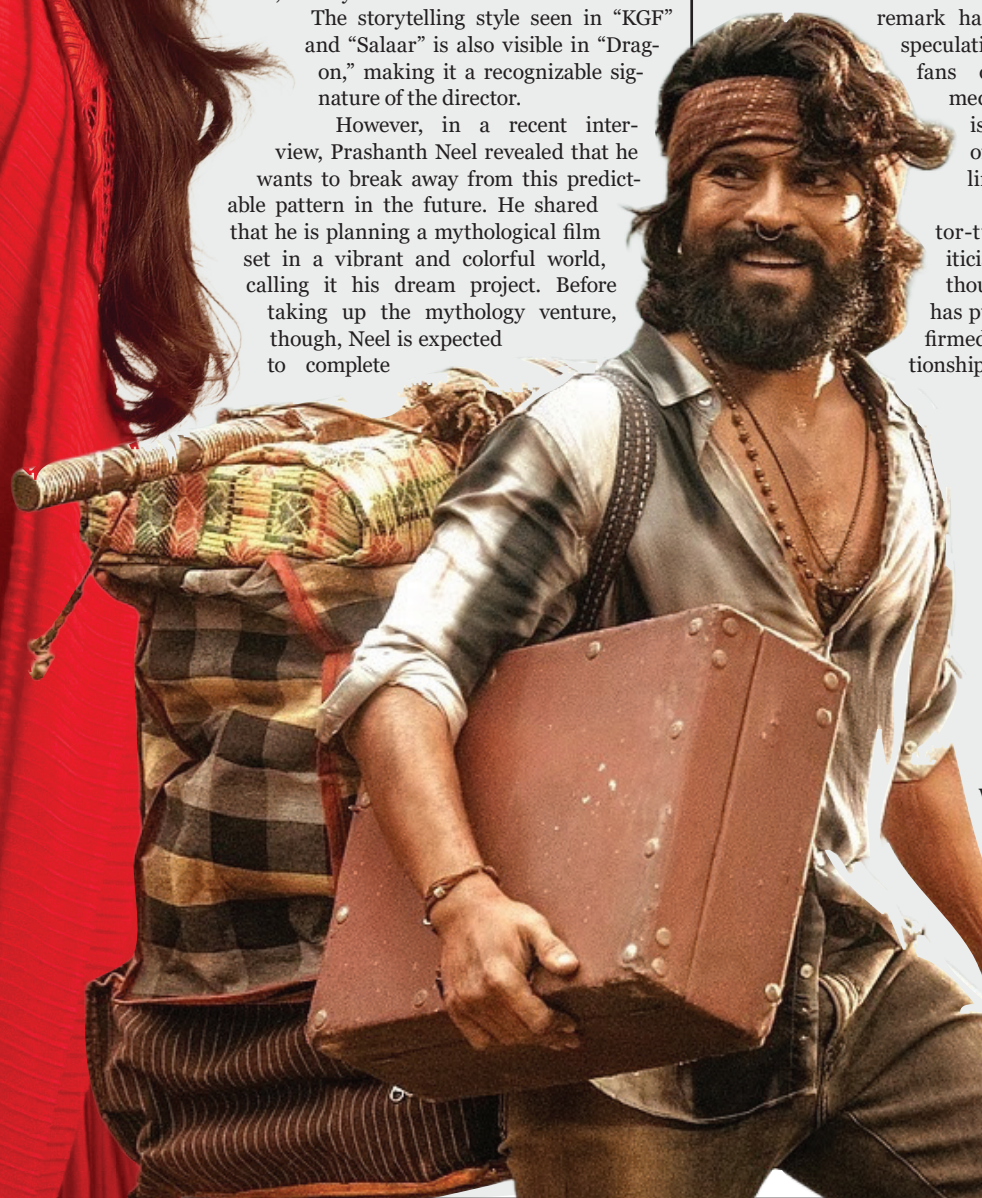
## Neel plans ambitious mythology film

Prashanth Neel has quickly emerged as one of the top filmmakers in Indian cinema. After making his directorial debut with the Kannada film "Ugramm," he shot to nationwide fame with the blockbuster "KGF" franchise.

The success of "Salaar" further strengthened his position in Telugu cinema. He is currently directing NTR's "Dragon," whose recently released glimpse generated massive buzz online. While the teaser received a strong response, some critics pointed out that Neel continues to follow his familiar template of dark visuals, gangster-driven storytelling, period-style narration, and layered character introductions.

The storytelling style seen in "KGF" and "Salaar" is also visible in "Dragon," making it a recognizable signature of the director.

However, in a recent interview, Prashanth Neel revealed that he wants to break away from this predictable pattern in the future. He shared that he is planning a mythological film set in a vibrant and colorful world, calling it his dream project. Before taking up the mythology venture, though, Neel is expected to complete



## Trisha feels May brought her more wins this year

May holds special significance for Trisha as it is her birthday month. However, the actress feels this year's May has brought her even more joy and success. Trisha recently scored a major hit with the Tamil film "Karuppu," starring Suriya.

Though the film follows a familiar commercial template, it connected strongly with Tamil audiences and is reportedly posting impressive collections in Tamil Nadu. Expressing her happiness over the film's success, Trisha thanked God on social media, writing, "My magical May said, one more for the win... Just God things."

Her "one more win" remark has sparked speculation among fans on social media. Trisha has often been linked to ac-

tor-turned-politician Vijay, though neither has publicly confirmed the relationship rumors.



## Thaman to compose Music for Mega 158

Music director Thaman is back in demand with a string of high-profile projects. After going through a relatively quiet phase last year, he has now landed another major film starring megastar Chiranjeevi.

Director Bobby Kolli (KS Ravindra) is set to reunite with Chiranjeevi after the blockbuster success of "Waltair Veerayya." Their new untitled film, tentatively referred to as #MEGA158, will begin production soon.

The makers officially announced Thaman as the music director today. Sharing the update, Bobby Kolli said he is reuniting with Thaman "for the explosive journey of #MEGA158." He added that after delivering chartbusters and massive energy together, they are gearing up to create another musical storm for Chiranjeevi.

Thaman recently signed Trivikram's "Adarsha Kumbham" and is also composing music for Nandamuri Balakrishna's upcoming films, marking a strong comeback phase in his career.

## Peddi clears censor, gets positive reports

Ram Charan and Janhvi Kapoor-starrer "Peddi" recently unveiled its trailer. While the trailer received a mixed response, it managed to clock record views online. The team has now intensified promotions with a whirlwind publicity tour across multiple cities. Meanwhile, "Peddi" has completed its censor formalities and received a U/A certificate. Directed by Buchi Babu Sana, the sports action drama reportedly has a runtime of nearly three hours. The makers say the film balances emotional depth with high-energy sports moments. According to industry buzz and censor reports, the final 25 minutes are said to be one of the film's major highlights and are expected to leave a strong impact. After postponing the film twice, the team appears to be moving ahead with a well-planned strategy. With the censor process completed and enough time left before release, Ram Charan, Janhvi Kapoor, and Buchi Babu Sana are now expected to focus extensively on promotions.