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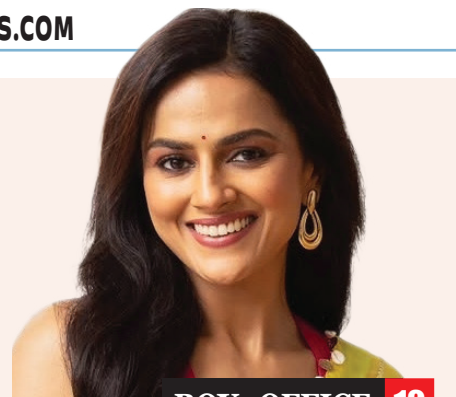
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GT MARCH INTO TOP TWO

STADIUM 11

A DECADE OF DREAMS



BOX -OFFICE 12



Saraswati Anthya Pushkaralu begin with grandeur at Kaleshwaram

Hyderabad, May 21: The 12-day-long Saraswati Anthya Pushkaralu commenced in a grand manner at the Kaleshwaram Pushkar Ghat in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district on Thursday, amid the chanting of Vedic hymns and traditional rituals. The sacred festival was formally inaugurated by Kanchi Kamakoti Peethadhipathi Sri Shankara Vijayendra Saraswati, who took the first holy dip at the auspicious time of 5:43 a.m., marking the ceremonial beginning of the Pushkar celebrations.

and several other dignitaries participated in the inaugural rituals and took the holy dip.

Minister for IT and Industries Duddilla Sridhar Babu, along with his spouse, Endowments Minister Konda Surekha, Endowments Commissioner Hanumantha Rao, District Collector Rahul Sharma, Religious Advisor Govinda Hari,

Large numbers of devotees have been arriving at Kaleshwaram to participate in the sacred bath rituals. To ensure a smooth and comfortable experience for pilgrims, the district administration has made extensive arrangements, including security measures, sanitation facilities, drinking water supply, medical services, special ambulance services, and transportation facilities.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Govt Hikes Minimum Wages

The State government's decision would benefit as many as 1.11 crore workers: CM

HYDERABAD, MAY 21

In a major decision benefitting more than 1.11 crore workers, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Thursday announced a revision of minimum wages for workers with effect from June 1, 2026. This is the first comprehensive revision of minimum wages in more than 12 years.

The Chief Minister said the government had classified workers into four categories — unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled and highly skilled — while dividing the state into three zones for determining minimum wages. Zone I comprises municipal corporations, Zone II includes municipalities, and Zone III covers rural and other areas.

The Chief Minister, speaking at a press conference along with labour minister G. Vivek Venkataswamy, said that the minimum wage for unskilled workers had been increased from Rs 12,750 to Rs 16,000, while semi-skilled workers' wages were raised from Rs 13,152 to Rs 17,000. Skilled workers will now receive Rs 18,500 instead of Rs 13,772, while highly skilled workers' wages have gone up from Rs 14,607 to Rs 20,000.

The Chief Minister described the move as the first major workers' welfare decision taken after the formation of Telangana state and alleged that the previous BRS government had neglected the issue for 10 years.

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Revanth demands special Parliament session for 33% women's quota

Hyderabad, May 21 (NSS): Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy demanded the Union government to hold an immediate special session of the Parliament on 33 per cent women reservation in the legislative bodies.

The Chief Minister paid floral tributes to the statue of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on the death anniversary at the Secretariat here on Thursday. Later, addressing the gathering, Revanth Reddy said the INDIA Alliance is ready to support woman res-

ervation bill in the Parliament.

The Chief Minister emphasised that women reservation in the legislative bodies should be enacted with the inspiration of Rajiv Gandhi who introduced women quota in local bodies for their political empowerment. Revanth Reddy also warned to stop politicising the women reservation bill and remembered the yeoman services rendered by great visionary Rajiv Gandhi

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Viksit Bharat 2047 is commitment, not slogan: PM



NEWDELHI, MAY 21

vision and the possible fallout of the ongoing West Asia crisis.

According to the sources, PM Modi also asked Union ministers to work with the vision of building a "Viksit Bharat" by 2047, stressing that the goal should be treated as a commitment rather than merely a slogan.

The meeting, held at Seva Teerth from 5 pm, brought together Union Cabinet ministers, ministers of state with independent charge and ministers of state in what sources described as the first full Council of Ministers meeting of the year.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday chaired a marathon meeting of the Council of Ministers that stretched for nearly four-and-a-half hours, focusing on governance reforms, administrative efficiency, the government's long-term "Viksit Bharat 2047"

Sources said the session effectively served as a midterm review of the government's performance as the NDA government approaches two years in office during its third consecutive term.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

KISHAN REDDY REVIEWS TG PROJECTS WITH ASHWINI VAISHNAW

New Delhi, May 21: Union minister for coal and mines G. Kishan Reddy on Thursday met Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw in New Delhi to review the progress of major railway projects in Telangana. The meeting at Rail Bhavan focused on railway electrification, new rail lines, station redevelopment and the expansion of passenger amenities across the state. Discussions were also held on the modernization of 42 major railway stations in Telangana.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

KTR attacks Congress govt over failed crop procurement

HYDERABAD, MAY 21

BRS working president KT Rama Rao has launched a scathing attack on the Congress government over the deepening crop procurement crisis in Telangana and accused Chief Minister of completely failing the farming community.

In a strongly-worded open letter addressed to the Chief Minister on Thursday, KT Rama Rao alleged that the Congress government has pushed Telangana farmers into unprecedented distress through administrative negligence, failed procurement management, and anti-farmer policies.

Expressing serious concern over the worsening situation at procurement centres across



the state, KTR said farmers who once cultivated with confidence and dignity during the BRS government are today being forced onto the streets in despair. He stated that Telangana's farming community, which believed decades of suffering had finally ended under the leadership of former Chief Minister, has once again been dragged back into uncertainty and humiliation under Congress rule.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

BJP Protests Arrests of Cow Protectors

HYDERABAD, MAY 21

Telangana BJP state president N. Ramchander Rao on Thursday strongly condemned the arrests of cow protectors and BJP activists amid incidents of alleged illegal cow transportation and cow slaughter ahead of the Bakrid festival.

Rao expressed outrage over increasing incidents of illegal cow slaughter in Telangana, particularly in Hyderabad, despite the existence of cow slaughter prohibition laws. He accused certain groups of hurting Hindu sentiments by taking the law into their own hands. He criticized the police for allegedly targeting cow protectors instead of taking action against those involved in illegal transportation and slaughter of cattle. He condemned the "illegal arrests" and bind-over proceedings initiated against BJP activists and gau rakshaks who were "peacefully trying to protect Gomata (Mother Cow) and uphold the law."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Digital Membership Push Across 119 Segments

HYDERABAD, MAY 21

BRS chief and former chief minister K. Chandrashekar Rao has appointed in-charges for all 119 Assembly constituencies in Telangana as part of party's digital membership enrollment campaign.

The party will conduct digital training sessions at Telangana Bhavan for constituency in-charges along with one IT expert from each Assembly segment. The digital application for membership enrollment is in the final stage of development and will soon be rolled out.

Following the state-level training, district-wise camps will be organized under the supervision of party general secretaries and constituency in-charges.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

THE FIRE OF 1965 RETURNS

VAIKO'S EXPLOSIVE WARNING TO CM VIJAY

PM SHRI SCHEME IS HINDI IMPOSITION. ACCEPTING IT IS A BETRAYAL: VAIKO

Invoking the sacrifices of Tamil martyrs and Anna's timeless pledge, MDMK General Secretary Vaiko appeals to Chief Minister Vijay to reject the PM SHRI scheme and protect Tamil Nadu's identity.

BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

Veteran MDMK leader Vaiko has reignited Tamil Nadu's most emotionally volatile political issue by launching a blistering attack on the Centre's PM SHRI scheme and the three language formula linked to it. In a dramatic public appeal to Chief Minister M. K. Stalin, Vaiko invoked the blood soaked memories of the 1938 and 1965 anti Hindi agitations, accused the Narendra Modi government of attempting to impose Hindi through education policy, and warned that accepting

the scheme would amount to a "betrayal" of Tamil martyrs. With references to C. N. Annadurai, emotional appeals to Tamil identity and pressure on the ruling DMK establishment, Vaiko has transformed an education policy debate into a full scale political and cultural confrontation.

Tamil Nadu has heard policy criticism before. It has heard routine opposition speeches before. But this statement from Vaiko was not administrative criticism. It was political memory converted into emotional ammunition. The veteran

Dravidian leader deliberately dragged the debate out of bureaucratic language and placed it inside the emotional graveyard of Tamil Nadu's anti-Hindi struggles. And once that happens in Tamil politics, the atmosphere changes instantly. Vaiko's statement was loaded with history, sacrifice, blood, identity and warning. The target was not merely the PM SHRI scheme. The target was what he sees as Delhi's continuing attempt to culturally standardise India through language.

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Bandi attended the as the chief guest of Sanskrit Sabha Celebrations

HYDERABAD, MAY 21: On 21.05.2026, Sanskrit Sabha Week celebrations were ayojyit in Suvarna Bharati Go Shala in Hyderabad. Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar attended the event as the chief guest. These celebrations are

being conducted under the leadership of Brahma Shri Srinivasa Bangarayya Sharma, Founder President of Tatvam Charitable Trust. BJP National Council member and former State President of Mahila Morcha Geetha Murthy, Brahma Shri Siddhartha Sharma, and Sanskrit students also participated in the event. Bangarayya Sharma stated that Sanskrit is the mother of all languages and mentioned that more such seminars and programs promoting the language would be organized in the future. The Union Minister also honored the elders who conducted these classes.



Viksit Bharat 2047 is commitment, not slogan: PM

>FROM PAGE 1 Presentations were made by more than half a dozen ministries, with nine ministries giving detailed briefings on their performance and future roadmap. The Cabinet Secretary and NITI Aayog also made presentations during the meeting. Sources said the meeting also highlighted ministries that had recorded the fastest disposal of files, with an emphasis on efficiency and timely implementation of decisions. During the meeting, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar also briefed ministers on the Prime Minister's recent five-nation visit and the key diplomatic outcomes of the tour.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets supporters after returning to New Delhi following his five-nation tour of the UAE, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Italy, on Thursday.

Furthermore, PM Modi is learnt to have referred to the ongoing West Asia crisis and its economic impact, directing ministries to take steps to ensure "minimum inconvenience to citizens".

Sectors such as energy, agriculture, fertilisers, aviation, shipping and logistics reportedly received focused attention during the meeting.

A high-powered informal group of ministers led by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is already monitoring the evolving situation. Rajnath Singh did not attend Thursday's Council of Ministers meeting due to his visit to South Korea, while Health Minister JP Nadda is currently in Geneva.

Sources said PM Modi was also felicitated at a meeting for the successful comple-

tion of his five-nation tour and the party's resounding victory in the West Bengal elections.

PM Modi on Thursday returned to New Delhi after concluding a five-nation tour spanning the United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Italy, focused on expanding India's engagement in energy security, defence co-operation, trade and critical minerals.

In the UAE, India signed multiple agreements covering strategic petroleum reserves, long-term LPG supply, defence and shipping, with Abu Dhabi also committing investments worth USD 5 billion. Modi's meeting with UAE President

Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan came against the backdrop of continuing tensions in West Asia.

In Europe, India deepened strategic ties across multiple countries. In the Netherlands, the two sides signed 17 agreements and upgraded relations to a strategic partnership, with discussions also touching upon West Asia tensions and global energy stability.

Sweden and Norway also elevated ties, with cooperation frameworks announced in areas including clean energy, innovation, defence, digital technologies and critical minerals, alongside broader engagement at the India-Nordic Summit.

Saraswati Anthya Pushkaralu begin with grandeur at Kaleshwaram

>FROM PAGE 1 District Collector Rahul Sharma stated that all government departments are working in coordination to ensure that devotees can perform the sacred Pushkar bath safely and conveniently during this spiritually significant period.

Special arrangements have also been made by the Kaleshwaram Mukteshwara Swamy Temple Committee for devotees visiting the temple after taking the holy dip. Several religious organizations are distributing free meals (Annadanam), while temporary shelters and shaded structures have been erected across Kaleshwaram to protect pilgrims from the intense summer heat.

Unique significance of Kaleshwaram Temple
The Kaleshwaram Mukteshwara Temple possesses a unique distinction rarely found anywhere in India. The temple houses both Yama (Kalesh-

wara) and Lord Shiva (Mukteshwara) on a single pedestal, making it spiritually distinctive. Tradition dictates that devotees first offer prayers to Kaleshwara and only then worship Mukteshwara.

Another remarkable feature of the temple is the Mukteshwara Lingam, which contains two small openings at its top. Devotees believe that regardless of how much water is poured during abhishekam, it mysteriously disappears into these openings.

A significant ritual followed by devotees is passing through the "Yama Konam", a narrow sacred passage within the temple premises. It is believed that passing through this path helps devotees cleanse themselves of sins and overcome the fear of death.

The Saraswati Anthya Pushkaralu is expected to witness a massive influx of devotees over the coming days, transforming Kaleshwaram into a major spiritual and cultural hub.

Hyderabad Gets Yale-Enox Experience Hub

HYDERABAD, MAY 21

ASSA ABLOY's Yale Experience Centre in Hyderabad has been designed as an immersive destination that showcases the future of smart security and connected living solutions. The centre brings together Yale's globally trusted legacy in home security with modern innovation, offering a comprehensive view of how technology is transforming residential and commercial spaces today. Built to provide a hands-on understanding of smart access and safety solutions, the experience centre demonstrates how convenience, security, design and connectivity can seamlessly work together in modern lifestyles.

The facility features an extensive display of Yale's smart security ecosystem, including its complete portfolio of smart locks designed for contemporary homes and evolving consumer needs. Visitors can explore a wide range of smart locking solutions equipped with advanced features such as mobile app access, re-

mote locking and unlocking, PIN code access, biometric authentication and smart home integration capabilities. The showcase highlights Yale's focus on delivering intelligent, user-friendly and reliable solutions that enhance both security and convenience for consumers.

In addition to Yale's smart lock portfolio, the experience centre also features a wide range of ENOX solutions, including wooden sliding systems and glass sliding systems that cater to modern architectural and interior requirements.

ASSA ABLOY's Yale Experience Centre serves as a platform for architects, designers, channel partners, homeowners to experience the brand's innovations firsthand and gain insights into the growing smart home and connected living landscape in India. Through this initiative, Yale continues to strengthen its commitment towards bringing advanced, future-ready security solutions to Indian consumers while increasing awareness around smart and connected lifestyles.

CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

KISHAN REDDY REVIEWS TG PROJECTS WITH ASHWINI VAISHNAW

>FROM PAGE 1 Talking to newsmen later, Kishan Reddy said he raised concerns regarding Hyderabad's MMTS (Multi-Modal Transport System), urging the Railways to regularize train timings and improve commuter facilities. He said the Railway Minister responded positively and assured that a special review meeting with officials would be convened to strengthen the MMTS network. The two leaders also discussed proposed high-speed rail corridors and ongoing railway expansion projects in Telangana. Kishan Reddy stated that the Centre, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, remains committed to accelerating railway infrastructure development in the state.

KTR attacks Congress.

>FROM PAGE 1 KTR alleged that after coming to power, the Congress government systematically dismantled every farmer welfare and protection mechanism introduced during the BRS regime. He accused the government of failing to provide investment support, mishandling fertiliser supply, and now completely collapsing the crop procurement system. Highlighting the scale of the crisis, the BRS working president said farmers across Telangana have been waiting helplessly at procurement centres for nearly two months with no proper procurement taking place. He noted that protests, dharnas, and road blockades are erupting daily across the state as

angry farmers demand justice. "There is not a single farmer in Telangana who has not taken to the streets. There is not a single highway where protests and road blockades have not taken place," KTR said in the letter. KTR expressed anguish that several farmers have reportedly collapsed and died near procurement centres due to heatstroke, stress, and prolonged waiting. He criticised the Chief Minister for allegedly failing to visit even a single procurement centre despite the ongoing humanitarian crisis. He further accused the Chief Minister of prioritising political visits to Delhi over addressing the suffering of Telangana farmers.

Govt Hikes Minimum Wages

>FROM PAGE 1

Explaining the background of the decision, the government said the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, empowers state governments to fix and periodically revise minimum wages in scheduled employments to ensure minimum living standards and social security for workers. Telangana currently has 73 scheduled employment sectors for which wages are notified. Although wages are supposed to be revised every five years, the state had not undertaken a comprehensive revision for nearly 12 years, with the last revision taking place between 2006 and 2012 in undivided Andhra Pradesh.

The labour minister said the prolonged delay created a huge gap between officially notified minimum wages and prevailing market conditions, inflation and rising living costs. Telangana's wage structure had also fallen behind neighbouring states and comparable

sectors. Due to the delay, trade unions and workers' associations approached the High Court by filing writ petitions, including W.P. No.14 of 2023 and W.P. No.34997 of 2022, seeking directions for wage revision. Recognising the importance and sensitivity of the issue, the government constituted a three-member Cabinet Sub-Committee through G.O.Rt. No.848 issued by the labour, employment, training and factories department on June 27, 2025. The committee examined various aspects, including long-pending demands from workers and industries, wage structures in neighbouring states, inflationary trends, rising cost of living and pending court cases. The labour and employment department also submitted a detailed report before the committee.

Based on the recommendations of the Minimum Wages Advisory Board, prevailing econom-

ic conditions, legal developments and the need to ensure industrial competitiveness and employment generation, the committee recommended a uniform and progressive wage structure in tune with the objectives of the new Wage Code-2019. The revised wages will come into force from June 1.

Revanth Reddy also advised the youth to move beyond the mindset of focusing only on IT jobs and opportunities in the United States, stating that education without employment and livelihood opportunities was meaningless.

Stressing the importance of technical and skill-based education, he said countries such as Germany, Japan and Singapore offered vast employment opportunities for skilled workers. He noted that the state government had established a Skills University to encourage youth towards skill-based education and employment opportunities.

Revanth demands special Parliament session for 33% women's quota

>FROM PAGE 1

who introduced information technology to the nation and earned it global recognition. "It was Rajiv Gandhi ushered in the era of technology in the country and also steered the country onto the path of development through

liberalised policies. The People's government is following the ideals of Rajiv Gandhi for the empowerment of women," he said. The Chief Minister also recalled that Sonia Gandhi took a courageous decision of fulfilling the dream of a separate Telangana State.

"Telangana is maintaining an inseparable bond with the Gandhi family. The relationship between the Gandhi family and Telangana people is more than a family. People will remember and cherish the Gandhi family as long as Telangana exists," he said.

Digital Membership Push Across I19 Segments

>FROM PAGE 1

Training camps will be held for a week in all Assembly constituencies, with two representatives selected from each polling booth. Food and accommodation will be provided to the participants.

The party said the official membership enrollment date will be announced after completion of the training programme. Senior leaders, including KCR, will personally participate in the membership renewal and enrollment drive. The BRS also plans to announce election schedules for committees from village to state level after the enrollment process, followed by party training camps.

BJP Protests Arrests....

>FROM PAGE 1

Demanding immediate withdrawal of cases filed against the activists, Rao urged the government to strictly implement the Cow Slaughter Prohibition Act and revoke all bind-over proceedings against the arrested individuals.

Further, he called for the establishment of checkpoints across Telangana, especially around Hyderabad, to prevent illegal transportation of cows. Rao demanded stringent criminal action against those violating the law through illegal cow slaughter.

Launching a sharp attack on the police, he alleged bias in their functioning

and said law enforcement agencies must act impartially. "It is unacceptable for the police, whose duty is to maintain law and order, to harass cow protectors while siding with a particular faction," he said.

Describing the cow as sacred in Hindu culture, Rao asserted that cow slaughter "under the pretext of festivals or any circumstances" would not be tolerated. He urged the government to act firmly against the forces attempting to disturb communal harmony. Rao warned that the BJP would launch a massive statewide agitation if the arrested activists were not released immediately.

THE MOST EXPLOSIVE PART OF HIS STATEMENT

>FROM PAGE 1
Vaiko invoked the dead. Not metaphorically. Directly. He declared: "The anti-Hindi agitation that erupted in 1938 exploded into a language revolution in 1965. Singa Thamizhan Chinnasamy, Aranganathan, teacher Veerappan, Keeranur Muthu, Sathyamangalam Muthu, Viralimalai Shanmugam, Mayiladuthurai Saranganani, and Peelamedu Dhandapani sacrificed their precious lives to the flames in opposition to Hindi imposition. Hundreds of Tamils were hunted down and killed by the Indian Army."

That single passage changes the entire political temperature of the debate. This is no longer about curriculum. No longer about educational reform. No longer about administrative policy. This becomes identity politics at its most emotionally combustible level.

IN TAMIL NADU, LANGUAGE IS NEVER JUST LANGUAGE. IT IS HISTORY, SELF-RESPECT, POLITICAL SURVIVAL.

ANNA WAS BROUGHT BACK INTO THE BATTLEFIELD

Vaiko then reached for the biggest emotional pillar in Dravidian political history, C. N. Annadurai. And he did it with surgical precision.

He reminded Tamils about the final phase of Anna's life, describing how the

THE FIRE OF 1965 RETURNS

ailing leader still stood before the people during the Tamil Nadu naming ceremony in 1968 and made what Dravidian politics considers a historic declaration.

Vaiko quoted him saying: "Hindi shall never again have a place in Tamil Nadu. Only Tamil and English shall remain hereafter in Tamil Nadu; no matter which party comes to power, this position can never be changed; it can never be changed for all time."

This was not accidental nostalgia. Vaiko was effectively sending a coded political message to the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam: If you claim Anna's legacy, you cannot dilute his language policy. That is the real pressure point here.

PM SHRI IS NOW BEING PROJECTED AS A POLITICAL TROJAN HORSE

The Centre may describe PM SHRI as a modernisation scheme for schools aligned with the National Education Policy. But Vaiko is framing it very differently.

His accusation was direct and unambiguous: "Now, the Narendra Modi government at the Centre is aggressively attempting to introduce the three-language policy and impose Hindi in Tamil Nadu through the

PM SHRI scheme." That word "aggressively" matters politically. Because it transforms the Centre from policymaker into aggressor in the public imagination of Tamil nationalist politics. And once the debate enters that territory, every educational provision starts looking like cultural infiltration.

THE WORD "BETRAYAL" HAS BEEN DELIBERATELY DEPLOYED

Vaiko escalated the emotional pitch further with one line designed to politically corner the state government.

"If this is accepted, it would amount to a blatant betrayal of those who shed blood and sacrificed their lives in resisting Hindi imposition. That sentence is not aimed at Delhi alone. It is aimed at Chief Minister M. K. Stalin's conscience, political inheritance and voter base. Because no Dravidian party wants to be seen as the generation that weakened Tamil Nadu's historic resistance to Hindi imposition."

"IF LANGUAGE POLICY BECOMES EMOTIONAL MEMORY, NO GOVERNMENT CAN TREAT IT AS A SIMPLE ADMINISTRATIVE FILE."

VAIKO THEN TURNED FROM WARNING TO POLITICAL PRESSURE

The statement suddenly shifted tone. From historical anger to direct political messaging. Vaiko praised minister Rajmohan for reportedly declaring that PM SHRI would never be accepted in Tamil Nadu. Then came the emotional appeal aimed straight at the Chief Minister:

"Lakhs upon lakhs of youths and students have worked for your victory with affection and trust in you. If the government you have formed is to truly evolve into a people's government, you must never accept the PM SHRI scheme."

This is sophisticated political pressure. Vaiko is effectively telling the DMK government: "Your mandate came from Tamil identity politics. Do not betray the emotional contract with the voters."

And then came the political assurance: "Tamil conscious people will stand firmly as a protective force behind your government if you take such a decision."

In simple political language, that means: Reject the scheme and Tamil nationalist forces will shield you politically.

THE "VANDE MATARAM" ISSUE ADDED MORE FUEL

Even though Vaiko's detailed state-

ment focused primarily on PM SHRI, the parallel controversy surrounding Vande Mataram has deepened the emotional atmosphere. The objection from Dravidian quarters is not merely about the song itself. It is about symbolic order and cultural hierarchy.

When "Vande Mataram" is played ahead of "Tamil Thai Vazhthu" at official events, many Tamil nationalist voices interpret it as a subtle assertion of northern cultural dominance over regional identity. That is why seemingly ceremonial decisions quickly become political detonators in Tamil Nadu.

WHY 1965 STILL TERRIFIES NATIONAL PARTIES IN TAMIL NADU

The 1965 Anti-Hindi Agitation permanently transformed Tamil Nadu politics. Violent protests, student mobilisations and emotional public anger destroyed Congress dominance in the state and accelerated the rise of Dravidian parties.

Since then, every national party entering Tamil Nadu has faced the same invisible political wall:

Tamils may negotiate economics. They may negotiate alliances. But language identity remains emotionally non-negotiable.

That is why even decades later, references to Hindi imposition still produce immediate political electricity.

THIS IS THE BIGGER BATTLE UNDERNEATH

At the surface level, this appears to be about language. But underneath, this is really about power.

Who decides education? Who shapes cultural identity? Who defines nationalism? Can India remain united without demanding uniformity?

Can federalism survive centralised emotional politics?

Tamil Nadu's Dravidian establishment has always answered these questions differently from the Hindi belt political imagination. And Vaiko has once again reopened that ideological fault line with full force.

DELHI MAY CALL IT EDUCATION POLICY. TAMIL NADU HEARS THE FOOTSTEPS OF HISTORY.

The PM SHRI scheme was designed as an education initiative. Vaiko has transformed it into a civilisational confrontation. By invoking martyrs, Anna, sacrifice and betrayal, he has dragged the debate out of government files and into Tamil Nadu's emotional bloodstream.

And once language enters the bloodstream of Tamil politics, no government can predict how far the fire will travel.

School Bus Drivers Should Be Given Training

Do Not Link It With Fitness Certificates: TRSMA Appeal

HYDERABAD

The Telangana Recognized School Managements Association (TRSMA) has urged the State Transport Department not to link the mandatory Refresher Training Course for educational institution bus drivers with the issuance of fitness certificates for school buses.

A delegation comprising TRSMA State President Sadula Madhusudhan, General Secretary N. Ramesh Rao, and State Advisor Komatireddy Gopal Reddy submitted a representation to the Transport Commissioner in this regard.

The association stated that it welcomes the Refresher Training policy introduced by the Transport Department for ensuring the safety of school students. However, they pointed out that several practical difficulties are being faced in its implementation.

According to TRSMA, there are nearly 45,000 school bus drivers across the state, while the IDTR training centre at

Sircilla has the capacity to train only about 800 drivers per month. Under the present circumstances, it would take more than five years to complete training for all drivers in the state.

The association further explained that the fitness renewal period for most school buses falls between May 15 and June 15. In addition, school examinations and academic activities continued until recently, making it difficult for drivers to attend the training programs.

Drivers from South and Central Telangana districts are required to travel 4 to 5 hours to reach Sircilla, and the entire training process consumes nearly five days, they said. TRSMA expressed concern that this could lead to a shortage of drivers during the reopening of schools and adversely affect the transportation system.

The association also requested the government to establish one dedicated training centre for every two districts in the state, if possible.

Therefore, TRSMA appealed to the government not to link driver training with fitness cer-



tificate renewals and to grant a four-year moratorium for existing drivers to complete the Refresher Training program.

School Bus Drivers Should Be Given Training Do Not Link It With Fitness Certificates: TRSMA Appeal Hyderabad, May 21: The Telangana Recognized School Managements Association (TRSMA) has urged the State Transport Department not to link the mandatory Refresher Training Course for educational institution bus drivers with the issuance of fitness certificates for school buses. A delegation comprising TRSMA State President Sadula Madhusudhan,

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PoPCoN at GITAM on June 26-27

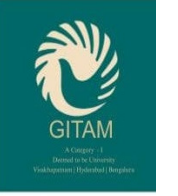
HYDERABAD

The GITAM Deemed to be University School of Business will organize a two-day conference titled "PoPCoN2026" — Professor of Practice Conference — on June 26 and 27, aimed at shaping the future of practice-based education in India.

Describing it as India's first curated conference-program for practice academics and industry professionals, Dr. Joseph Paul, Chairperson — (EEP | MDP | Consulting), Centre for Business Engagement, GITAM School of Business, said in a press release on Thursday that PoPCoN 2026 marks the beginning of a national movement for Practice Academics in the country.

The conference will be graced by Prof. Arvind Sahay, Director of Management Development Institute Gurgaon and Independent Director at BirlaNu Ltd, Tata AIA, Matter, Brandscape, and Vardhman, as the chief guest. Dr. EmandiSankara Rao, former Chairman of MDI Gurgaon and Independent Director, GMR Group, will deliver the keynote address as the chief speaker.

With India witnessing a growing demand for practice-integrated education, PoPCoN 2026 is designed to equip, connect, and empow-



er professionals who bring industry expertise into academic spaces. The conference will feature a niche blend of practitioners and academicians through panel discussions, expert talks, keynote sessions, hands-on workshops, and networking opportunities. Key themes of the conference include transitioning from industry to academia, integrating practitioner insights with academic rigor, contributing to case studies and caselets, exploring academic career opportunities, designing structured transition plans, and understanding the evolving role of Professors of Practice in higher education. The event will also provide opportunities for networking, collaboration, and interaction between academicians and practitioners. The conference

is especially relevant for Professors of Practice, Assistant and Associate Professors of Practice, adjunct faculty, guest lecturers, entrepreneurs interested in teaching, professionals aspiring for academic careers, corporate trainers, consultants, as well as deans, directors, and recruiters from educational institutions.

The registration fee includes access to all sessions and workshops, curated learning materials, welcome kit, lunch and refreshments on both days, an exclusive networking dinner on June 26, certificate of participation, and deboarding goodies. For further details regarding registration and fee structure, interested participants may contact Alekhya Maram, PoPCoN Coordinator, at cbe@gitam.edu or call 96500 89575.

Telangana's small, medium mango growers find global reach through collective marketing

HYDERABAD

When Balakrishna, a mango farmer from Pebbair village in Wanaparthy district, exported just eight crates of Mallika variety mangoes to overseas markets this season, it marked more than a personal success story. It underscored how small and medium farmers in the state are gaining direct access to national and international markets through collective marketing mechanisms promoted by the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP). Providing national and international access to women small and medium farmers was possible with the active monitoring and mentorship of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Minister Dr. Danasari Anasuya Seethakka.

The export was facilitated by Be'nishan, a federation of Farmer Producer Organisations incorporated as a Farmer Producer Company (FPC) under the Companies Act, 2013, for organised marketing of fruits and vegetables.

What was once considered unviable for small growers — exporting limited quantities of produce — has now become feasible through aggregation, grading and supply-chain support provided by the company. Hundreds of farmers across the State have been able to market their produce profitably through the initiative.

Apart from linking farmers to domestic and overseas buyers, Be'nishan has tied up with modern retail traders including Reliance, Flipkart, Big Basket,



Metro Cash & Carry, Waycool, More, Prism, Scoops, Star Bazaar and Ratnadeep, besides agro-processing industries such as Plant Lipids, Yellow & Greens, Suguna, Sneha, KJL and MARS.

According to SERP officials, Be'nishan has so far (cumulative) recorded business worth Rs 463 crore through procurement under the Minimum Support Price (MSP), Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) and Price Support Scheme (PSS) mechanisms, which includes Rs 151 crore through direct output marketing. Farmers are said to be earning an additional 15% to 20% income through the model, at a time when securing remunerative returns itself had become a challenge.

The procurement process, which officials say is completed within two hours and payments settled within two days, has eased long-standing difficulties faced by small growers.

Traditionally, farmers with limited quantities of produce struggled to attract large traders, who preferred truck-load

consignments to offset transportation costs. Small growers were often left with no option but to sell through intermediaries at lower prices, as transporting produce to distant markets was not economically viable.

Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs), operated under Be'nishan, have emerged as a key link in addressing this gap. Veepanagandla FPC, operating across five mandals, has 370 shareholders and an annual turnover of Rs 1.45 crore, and counting. This turnover includes business of other crops like red chillies, custard apple, maize, red gram, in addition to mango.

The FPC also generates seasonal employment for around 450 people during the current mango season. Be'nishan provides infrastructure support including grading and sorting machines, segregators, cooling chambers, box packing facilities, transportation and pre-cooling units. These measures help maintain fruit quality required for export markets. "The quality of the fruit is most

important to get a better price. If mangoes release ooze, they get discoloured, reducing quality and price," said Rajitha Nared, Chief Operating Officer, SERP.

She said farmers were being trained in scientific harvesting practices such as stem cutting, where a small portion of the stem is retained while plucking the fruit to avoid damage at the stem-end. "Harvesting with a 0.5 cm to 2 cm stem helps maintain quality, reduce diseases and extend shelf life," she explained.

She added that post-harvest practices such as Desapping — removal of sticky latex from the fruit surface — were also being closely monitored. The process involves trimming the stalk to about 0.5 cm to 1 cm and placing the fruits upside down on racks for around 45 minutes to drain the sap, she explained.

SERP farm unit said every fruit intended for export is handpicked and processed to meet quality standards, while year-round market assurance provided by the company has helped improve farmer confidence and incomes.

It is pertinent to note that, the Be'nishan Federation currently comprises 84 Farmer Producer Organisations — including 65 Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs) and 19 cooperative FPOs — spread across 30 districts, 404 mandals and 3,072 villages in the State. The federation covers 6,967 Farmer Producer Groups (FPGs) and has a membership base of 1.09 lakh small and marginal farmers, most of whom are also members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs).

Jupally urges influencers to promote heritage, culture and social awareness



HYDERABAD

The Telangana government is looking to strengthen both global and local tourism outreach by leveraging the growing influence of digital creators and social media platforms, Tourism, Culture and Excise Minister Jupally Krishna Rao said.

Calling tourism a major driver of economic growth, employ-

ment and cultural promotion, the Minister urged influencers to showcase Telangana's scenic destinations, heritage structures, art forms and hospitality to audiences across the world while also encouraging people within the State to explore local tourist destinations.

Addressing the "Telangana Tourism Creators Meet" organised at Tourism Plaza, Begum-

pet on Wednesday, as part of the Tourism Week celebrations under the government's "Praja Palana — Pragathi Pranalika" 99-day action plan, the Minister said that the tourism promotion would generate employment opportunities for local youth and contribute significantly to the State's revenue. The revenue generated through tourism, he noted, could be utilised for strengthening healthcare, education and tourism infrastructure, he said.

The Minister said people should make an effort to visit tourist destinations within Telangana and observed that travelling was not necessarily dependent on high spending. Reducing unnecessary expenses and spending time at tourist locations could help people overcome stress and improve mental well-being amid fast-paced lifestyles, he said. "The government was taking

steps to attract domestic, international and intra-State tourists by improving tourism infrastructure and visitor amenities, he added. Measures are being initiated to ensure cleanliness and provide basic facilities at tourist destinations besides introducing modern tent accommodation facilities," he said.

Krishna Rao said unused Haritha hotels and tourism lands would be redeveloped and utilised more effectively to enhance tourism revenue and visitor experiences.

During the event, the Minister launched the new Meta account and official Instagram handle of the Telangana Tourism department. A promotional video titled Timeless Telangana, showcasing the State's historical monuments, heritage structures, handicrafts, handlooms and Kalamkari art, was screened on the occasion.

Malkajgiri Corpn Needs Substantial Funds: MP Eatala Rajender

HYDERABAD

BJP MP Eatala Rajender on Thursday said the Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation requires substantial funding to address mounting civic and infrastructure challenges following the merger of several municipalities and villages into the corporation.

Participating in a review meeting on development works held at a private hotel in Nagole, Eatala said Chief Minister

Revanth Reddy, who earlier represented the Malkajgiri Lok Sabha constituency, has a clear understanding of the region's issues and is aware of the need for long-term solutions. He said that discussions with the Chief Minister had covered major concerns including the Jawahar Nagar dumping yard, smaller dumping sites such as Macha Bolarum, sewage contamination of lakes, spread of water hyacinths, lack of surveillance cameras, theft inci-

dents, inadequate street lighting, drinking water shortages and drainage problems.

Eatala stressed that development should not suffer due to lack of funds and called for adequate budget allocations to the corporation. He said resolving the Jawahar Nagar dumping yard issue would require cooperation from all political parties and stakeholders across the constituency. "Regardless of political differences, development is

a collective responsibility," he said, assuring that permanent solutions would be explored for all dumping yard-related problems affecting the residents.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Vinay Krishna Reddy, MLAs Sabitha Indra Reddy, Laxma Reddy, Sudheer Reddy, Rajasekhara Reddy and Malia Reddy, besides municipal chairpersons, public representatives and officials.



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SOUTHWEST LANDS IN HYDERABAD



America's famous low cost airline has opened a massive Global Innovation Centre in Hyderabad. No flights. No boarding passes. No air hostesses announcing seat belt instructions. Just engineers, coders, AI experts, and cybersecurity professionals quietly building the airline's digital future. The story is not aviation. The story is India becoming the backroom brain of global capitalism.

BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

India is a magical country. Here, people still think an airline office means one must immediately hear aircraft noise overhead. So naturally, many looked at Southwest Airlines entering Hyderabad and asked: "Where are the planes?" Southwest Airlines did not come to Hyderabad to park Boeing aircraft. It came to park algorithms.

Hyderabad Has Become the New East India Company Headquarters

Difference is this time Indians are getting the salaries. Once upon a time foreigners came to India searching for spices. Today they come searching for software engineers.

History has a dangerous sense of humour. The British arrived with ships. The Americans are arriving with cloud computing contracts. And Hyderabad has become the grand durbar hall of the global corporate empire. Every multinational now lands there carrying the same shopping list: Artificial Intelligence. Data Analytics. Cybersecurity. Cloud Engineering. Earlier

India exported cotton. Now India exports exhausted software professionals attending midnight Zoom calls.

The Great Indian GCC Mahotsav

Today every multinational corporation wants a GCC. Global Capability Centre. Very sophisticated phrase. In old English it was called "office." But modern corporations believe if the name becomes lon-

chance somebody in Hyderabad wrote the code. This is globalisation in necktie form.

America Has Discovered a Very Important Fact

Indians Work Even After Sunset. American Corporations Are Facing A Brutal Problem. Technology talent is expensive. Very expensive. Especially AI engineers. In Silicon Valley, one software

Telangana Government Is Playing This Game Very Smartly

To give credit where due, Telangana has aggressively marketed Hyderabad like a shopkeeper during festival season. And the strategy is working. The government understands something many politicians still do not: Future economic wars will not be fought with factory chimneys alone. They will be fought with data centres, AI labs, and engineering ecosystems. That is why every week Hyderabad seems to inaugurate another technology centre with giant LED screens and ceremonial lamps. At this rate, even Mars Mission Control may soon open a branch office in HITEC City.

Southwest's Real Fear Is Not Competition. It Is Technology Failure

After the airline's infamous operational collapse in America some years ago, management learnt an unpleasant lesson. Passengers can forgive delayed flights. Markets cannot forgive technological incompetence. Modern aviation runs on software more than fuel. One broken digital system can collapse thousands of flights. That is why air-

lines today are behaving less like transport companies and more like technology companies with wings attached. And that explains Hyderabad.

The Real Winner Here Is the Indian Middle Class Engineer

For thirty years Indian parents forced children into engineering colleges with devotion. Finally global corporations are justifying the obsession. But there is one warning. The age of ordinary coding jobs is disappearing. The new market wants specialists. AI. Cybersecurity. Platform Engineering. Cloud Infrastructure. The engineering graduate who only knows how to restart a laptop and say "Have you tried rebooting?" is entering dangerous territory.

Hyderabad Is No Longer Asking for Investment. It Is Demanding Strategic Relevance.

Southwest Airlines opening a technology centre in Hyderabad without operating flights in India may sound absurd only to people still living mentally in the twentieth century. The modern economy does not care where aircraft fly. It cares where intelligence sits.

ACTING LOCALLY FOR GLOBAL IMPACT

(On the occasion of "International Day of Biodiversity" on 22 May)

Biological diversity resources are the pillars upon which we build our civilisations. Biodiversity is understood as the wide variety of plants, animals, and microorganisms, in addition with variety of crops and breeds of livestock - and the variety of ecosystems (lakes, forests, deserts, agricultural landscapes) that host multiple kind of interactions among their members. Fish provide 20 percent of animal protein for about 3 billion people. Over 80 percent of the human diet is provided by plants. Over 80 percent of rural people of developing countries rely on traditional plant-based medicines for their basic healthcare.

Theme of International Day of Biodiversity-2026

On the International Day of Biodiversity, the activities like awareness through print and electronic media, distributing materials related to biodiversity, organising exhibitions/seminars/webinars, screening biodiversity related movies, efforts to preserve endangered species and habitats, and planting trees to protect environmental degradation. The theme of 2026 International Day of Biodiversity is "Acting Locally for Global Impact". This day commemorates the adoption of the Convention on Biological Diversity on 22 May 1992. The UN de-



International Day of Biodiversity

The loss of biodiversity threatens all, including our basic health. The biodiversity loss may also lead to zoonotic diseases transmitted from animals to humans. The preservation of biodiversity offers excellent tools to fight against pandemics like coronavirus. Global biodiversity is an essential asset of tremendous value to future generations. Keeping the importance of biodiversity to plant and animal kingdom, including humans, the UN has decided to celebrate the "International Day of Biodiversity" annually on 22 May to bring awareness on biodiversity, call for action to restore the biodiversity loss, highlight the importance of seizing strategies at all levels, and also to encourage bolder initiatives by all actors, including private sector, civil society and the media.

decided to promote global efforts towards conserving biological diversity, sustainable use, and ensuring equitable benefit sharing from genetic resources. The International Day of Biodiversity is more than a commemoration, it is a clarion call to reimagine our relationship with nature. By acting boldly and collectively, on biodiversity, meet the targets and ensure a flourishing planet for future generations. As we move towards 2030, the urgency is clear. It's not only to protect environment, but also to reimagining our relationship with the environment and embracing a future where both people and nature and thrive together. It's right time to renew our commitment to the vision and take bold steps towards a sustainable, harmonious world.

— Prof Burra Madhusudhan Reddy
9949700037

IPL Match Sparks Massive Traffic Curbs Around Uppal

HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Traffic Police issued a major traffic advisory ahead of the Indian Premier League clash between Sunrisers Hyderabad and Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Uppal on May 22. Heavy congestion is expected from noon to midnight on routes connecting Nagole, Habsiguda, Bodupal, Amberpet and Raman-

thapur via Uppal Junction. Traffic police imposed diversions for heavy vehicles, including trucks, tippers, private buses and water tankers, and advised the commuters to avoid Uppal stretches and use alternate routes.

Spectators have been urged to use Metro Rail and RTC buses to reach the stadium. Special parking arrangements have been made at Penguin Parking, TGIALA Parking, open grounds near

NSL Building and Modern Bakery areas. A total of five major parking locations have been identified for the IPL Cricket Match, and four locations of these are situated outside the RGIC stadium within a 500 meters radius for general public use, and one designated parking area is inside the stadium exclusively for pass holders (VVIP/VIP). The advisory was issued by the Traffic-II wing of Malkajiri Police.

US road accident: Body of Nalgonda student to reach Hyderabad today

HYDERABAD

Minister for Roads & Buildings and Cinematography Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has extended support to the family of Gadusu Navya, a native of Cheruvugattu village in Narketpally mandal of Nalgonda district, who lost her life in a tragic road accident in the United States last week.

Following Komatireddy's intervention, Navya's mortal remains are scheduled to arrive at Shamshabad International Airport in the early hours of Friday. The state government has made arrangements to transport the mortal remains to India at its own expense.

Navya, daughter of Gadusu Srinivas Reddy and Shobha, had gone to the United States for higher educa-

tion with aspirations of supporting her family after completing her Masters. Her untimely death has left the family in deep distress, particularly as her parents had reportedly sold land and incurred debts to fund her education.

Deeply moved after learning about the family's condition and the ill health of Navya's mother, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy directed officials to speedup the repatriation process. He personally coordinated with senior State officials, the Ministry of External Affairs, representatives of the Telugu Association of North America (TANA), and the San Francisco Consulate General's office to ensure the mortal remains were brought back without delay.

"Parents losing their daughter is

an unbearable tragedy. The family is not alone. I, along with the State Government, will stand by them in every possible manner," Komatireddy said.

Responding to the Minister's appeal, TANA members came forward and raised nearly ₹70 lakh to support Navya's family. Appreciating their gesture, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said the humanitarian spirit displayed by Telugu people abroad once again reflected the strength of the community.

He also thanked Sreekar Reddy, Consul General, San Francisco for coordinating with the Chicago Embassy to speedup the process, along with TANA Team Square co-chairman Chiranjeevi Galla and others for extending support to the bereaved family. (NSS)

Farmer's Organ Donation Saves Six Lives

HYDERABAD

Ramajipalli Satyanarayana, a 48-year-old farmer from Mupparam village in Medak district, Telangana, saved six lives through organ donation after being declared brain dead following a road accident.

According to officials, Satyanarayana, son of Ramajipalli Balaiah, sustained critical injuries when a four-wheeler hit his two-wheeler at Enkenpally in Sadashivpet on May 18, 2026. He was initially shifted to the

Government Hospital in Sangareddy and later moved to a private hospital in Hyderabad for advanced treatment. Despite emergency medical care, he was declared brain dead at 2:41 PM on May 20.

In a remarkable humanitarian gesture, his wife, Mrs. Amrutha, consented to donate his organs. The donated organs included two kidneys, liver, lungs and two corneas, benefiting six patients in need. The Jeevandan Programme expressed profound gratitude to the family for their noble decision,

stating that the gesture would inspire greater awareness about organ donation across Telangana.

Officials also noted that the Jeevandan Programme has reached a significant milestone with 80 brain-dead organ donations recorded in Telangana in 2026 so far.

Prof. Bhushan Raju, nodal officer of Jeevandan programme, said the programme remains committed to promoting organ donation awareness and facilitating life-saving transplants across the State.

Singareni's first BESS project saves Rs.25.66 lakh in four months



HYDERABAD

The Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), established for the first time in Singareni in Telangana as per the directions of the State government, is now yielding positive results. This system enables surplus solar power generated during the daytime to be stored in batteries instead of being supplied free of cost to the grid, thereby allowing its utilisation whenever required and generating financial benefits for Singareni.

Following the directions of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy and Deputy Chief Minister & Energy Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu, a 1 MW Battery Energy Storage System was established

four months ago as an auxiliary facility to the 28 MW Singareni Solar Plant in the Mandamarri Area. The management invested Rs.2.5 crore for the project.

Taking advantage of the encouragement being extended by the State government towards solar energy, several state-owned organisations, including Singareni, have been generating solar power. Singareni has already established solar plants with a total capacity of 245.5 MW at eight different locations. Out of these, plants with a capacity of 147 MW have been categorised as Open Access Plants, while the remaining plants with a capacity of 98.50 MW have been categorised as in-house plants and connected to the Telangana power

grids. Although electricity generated from these in-house plants is also connected to the Telangana power grid, according to the power purchase agreement, only the electricity consumed for local requirements is utilised, while Telangana DISCOM does not make any payment for the surplus electricity generated. The excess electricity must therefore be supplied to the grid free of cost. In this manner, thousands of surplus units generated daily from the in-house plants were being supplied to the grid without any financial benefit.

With the objective of deriving value even from this surplus power, Singareni, under the directions of the State government, experimentally established a 1 MW BESS

unit at the Mandamarri plant — the first such initiative in the state.

The 28 MW solar plant at Mandamarri has been functioning efficiently and supplying electricity required for the mines and colonies in the Mandamarri and Srirampur Areas. However, after meeting local power requirements, some electricity still remained surplus. In this context, Singareni established the Battery Energy Storage System at the Mandamarri Plant in January this year.

Since then, the BESS unit has been utilised for local requirements, and the remaining 3,35,485 units of electricity have been stored and used whenever required. As a result, Singareni has achieved financial savings amounting to Rs.25,66,460.

It is noteworthy that a BESS unit with just 1 MW capacity could save such a substantial amount of electricity and generate significant financial benefit. The Singareni management expressed happiness over the success of the BESS project, which was established experimentally under the directions of the State Government.

The management further stated that, in line with the Government's objective of promoting renewable energy resources, Singareni is prepared to undertake more such projects in the future.

UP Gov calls for campaign against child marriage, dowry

LUCKNOW: (MAY 21)

Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel on Thursday called for a campaign against child marriage and the dowry system, saying girls should not be forced to discontinue their education due to early marriage. Chairing a review meeting of principals of government, constituent and aided colleges affiliated to Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Rohilkhand University at Jan Bhavan here, the governor said families should be sensitised to ensure that girls continue their studies even after attaining the legal age of marriage. Patel directed universities and colleges to actively support campaigns titled "Stop Child Marriage" and "Stop Dowry System".

Cross Complaints Lodged in Lucknow Over Rahul Gandhi, BJP Minister Remarks

LUCKNOW: (MAY 21)

Cross complaints were filed in Lucknow against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Uttar Pradesh minister Dinesh Pratap Singh on Thursday over the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha's "traitor" remarks in Raebareilly a day earlier and the minister's comments. The police said they were yet to lodge an FIR in either case, but have initiated a probe over the complaints from both sides. Congress workers submitted a complaint at the Hussainganj police station seeking the registration of an FIR against Uttar Pradesh Minister of State (independent charge) Dinesh Pratap Singh for allegedly making objectionable remarks against Rahul Gandhi and the Gandhi family.

Three injured as drunk driver crashes SUV into another vehicle in west Delhi

NEW DELHI: (MAY 21)

Three people were injured after a drunken driver allegedly rammed his SUV into another car in west Delhi's Moti Nagar area in the early hours of Thursday, police said. The incident took place on Shivaji Road around 3.15 am when a black SUV (Scorpio) bearing a Haryana number plate, driven negligently, broke through the central verge grill and collided with another car bearing a Delhi registration number, Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Darade Sharad Bhaskar said in an official statement. Three occupants of the car -- identified as Harbir Singh, Gurdeep Singh and Sukhvinder Singh -- sustained injuries in the accident, the officer said.

Jagan says Amaravati 'will never be reality', pushes 'Mavigun' as Andhra capital

AMARAVATI, MAY 21

Former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday claimed that Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's vision of Amaravati as the state capital will "never become a reality", and instead pitched the 'Mavigun' region as a viable alternative. Stating that Amaravati as the state capital is not practical, he remarked that one, two or even three decades later, Andhra Pradesh will be without a state capital.

"What Chandrababu is conceiving will never be a reality. You know that. I know that. Anybody with reasonable common sense would agree to that," the YSR Congress Party president told a press conference at the party office at Tadepalli. Jagan Mohan Reddy reiterated that 'Mavigun' (Machilipatnam, Vijayawada and Guntur) will be an ideal region as the state capital. "Mavigun is something which is already in existence. Day one itself, you will have a certain level of city



in place with all infrastructure, be it a port in Machilipatnam, be it an international airport in Vijayawada, be it four national highways, three railway stations, nine medical colleges and educational institutions," he said. The former Chief Minister stated that in Mavigun, there is nothing that the government requires to spend, except for improving connectivity. "At the best, in a period of five to seven years, you can spend 10 per cent of whatever you are talking about in Amaravati," he said, adding that Rs 15,000 crore to Rs 20,000 crore will suffice over a period of 5-7 years. "Accept Mavigun rather than constructing buildings there. Shift them over here. The moment you declare Mavigun as a capital, it comes into existence. There, even after one, two or three decades, you would find yourself in a situation where Andhra Pradesh has no capital." Jagan remarked that Mavigun has become the cause of Chandrababu Naidu's rising blood pressure. "The Mavigun initiative we proposed has garnered widespread public support. Unable to provide an-

swers or cope with this reality, Chandrababu Naidu is suffering from rising blood pressure out of sheer frustration," he said. The YSRCP leader also flagged what he called the exorbitant cost of developing infrastructure in Amaravati. He said former Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu constructed the Telangana Secretariat, and about Rs 615 crore was spent on this structure, which spans nearly 10 lakh square feet. "However, the cost of our Secretariat -- comprising just five buildings -- has already exceeded Rs 10,665 crore. Whenever one questions this blatant looting, Chandrababu's blood pressure shoots up," he said. Jagan said Chandrababu Naidu was now talking about another Assembly building and a brand-new High Court. He alleged that the very same companies to which Chandrababu Naidu awarded contracts before 2019 were once again awarded those works in 2024 after the original tenders had been cancelled and re-tendered. Jagan claimed

that the Chief Minister handed over these tenders through a tailor-made and rigged process. The YSRCP leader also slammed Chandrababu Naidu for calling YSRCP 'Goddilla party' (Axe party) and accusing it of practising politics of murder. Jagan gave details of the YSRCP leaders and workers allegedly killed by TDP men since the coalition government came to power in 2024. He alleged that it was the TDP which resorted to the politics of murder. He said his grandfather, Raja Reddy, father of Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy (YSR) and uncle Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy, was killed. "Who killed my grandfather, Raja Reddy. Were they not TDP men?" he asked and alleged that the killers were sheltered in the TDP headquarters in Hyderabad.

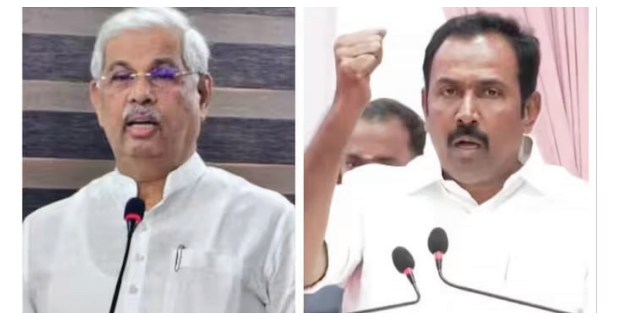
Jagan said that during the Assembly session, Chandrababu Naidu had told his father, YSR, "I'll see how you come to the assembly", and within two or three days, YSR's helicopter crashed under suspicious circumstances.

South Western Railway Revises Timings of Kanniyakumari-KSR Bengaluru Express

CHENNAI, MAY 21:

South Western Railway has announced a revision in the timings of Train No. 16525 Kanniyakumari-KSR Bengaluru Daily Express due to engineering works being carried out on platforms at Bengaluru East railway station. The revised schedule will come into effect from May 26, 2026, from Kanniyakumari and will remain in force until further notice. According to railway officials, there will be no change in timings between Kanniyakumari and Tirupattur. However, arrival and departure timings at several stations after Tirupattur have been revised. As per the new schedule, the train will arrive at Kuppam at 4.28 am and depart at 4.30 am instead of the earlier timing of 3.54 am and 3.55 am. At Bangar-

apet, the revised timing will be 5.07 am and 5.09 am, replacing the existing timing of 4.19 am and 4.21 am. Similarly, the train will reach Malur at 5.29 am and leave at 5.30 am, while at Whitefield the revised timing will be 5.59 am and 6.01 am. At Krishnarajapuram, the train is scheduled to arrive at 6.10 am and depart at 6.12 am. The revised timing for Bengaluru East station is 6.22 am arrival and 6.23 am departure, while at Bengaluru Cantonment the train will arrive at 6.29 am and depart at 6.31 am. Despite the changes in timings at intermediate stations, the train will continue to reach KSR Bengaluru at its scheduled time of 7.00 am. Railway authorities have advised passengers to check the revised timings before commencing their journey to avoid inconvenience.



Tamil Nadu Congress MLA praises Rahul Gandhi during oath, Governor objects

During the oath-taking as state minister, Congress MLA S Rajesh Kumar, while reading out the oath from a paper, suddenly hailed Congress leaders K Kamaraj, Rajiv Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi.

During the oath-taking as state minister at the Lok Bhavan here, Kumar, while reading out the oath from a paper, suddenly hailed Congress leaders Kamaraj, Rajiv Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, spontaneously prompting the Governor to say "that is not part of your oath".

Immediately, an official approached Kumar and pointed to the written statement placed in front of him. Thereafter, he completed the oath. Minutes later, the TVK legislator from Salem South, A Vijay Tamilan Parthiban, after taking the oath as a minister, hailed party leader and Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay, present on the dais, saying "vaazhga thalaivar, valarga Tamil" (long live the leader, may Tamil prosper)". TVK member from Sripurumbudur, Thennarasu, concluded his oath as a minister by saying he would remain loyal to the party leader and the party.

Tamil Nadu Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, who swore-in ministers into the TVK Cabinet during its expansion on Thursday, asked Congress leader S Rajesh Kumar to stick to the written oath after the latter deviated. Arlekar asked Kumar to confine to the written oath given to him after the Congress leader raised slogans hailing his party leaders. Kumar is the Congress Legislature Party leader representing Killiyoor constituency in the Tamil Nadu Assembly. He was among the 23 MLAs, including 21 from TVK who were inducted into the C. Joseph Vijay-led Cabinet on Thursday.

Suvendu Adhikari aide murder case: CBI arrests sixth accused from UP's Ballia

KOLKATA, MAY 21

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Thursday arrested the sixth accused in connection with the murder of West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari's personal assistant, Chandranath Rath, from Ballia district in Uttar Pradesh, officials of the central agency confirmed. Officials said the accused has been identified as 35-year-old Navin Kumar Singh, originally hailing from the Zamani area under the Fefna police station limits in Uttar Pradesh's Ballia district. He was arrested following a joint operation conducted by the CBI and the Uttar Pradesh Police. According to sources aware of the development, the weapon recovered from Navin Kumar Singh was suspected



to be the same firearm used in the murder of Chandranath Rath. The weapon has been sent for forensic examination to ascertain whether it matches the firearm used in the crime. Earlier on Wednesday, the CBI had arrested the fifth accused in the case, identified as 40-year-old Vinay Rai alias Pumpum Rai, from Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. Prior to that, on May 18, the central investigating agency had arrested the alleged main shooter, identified as Rajkumar Singh, from Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh. That arrest was also made with the assistance of the Uttar Pradesh Police. Before the CBI took over the investigation, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the West Bengal Police had

arrested three other accused in the case, namely Mayank Raj Mishra, Vicky Maurya and Raj Singh, in connection with Chandranath Rath's murder. Forty-one-year-old Rath, who had earlier served in the Indian Air Force, was shot dead in Madhyamgram in North 24 Parganas district late on May 6. The incident took place within 48 hours of the announcement of the high-stakes West Bengal Assembly election results. Rath was seated in the front passenger seat of a car when unidentified assailants arrived on a motorcycle, opened fire and fled the spot immediately after the attack. The driver of the vehicle also sustained injuries in the incident. Both Rath and the injured driver were rushed to a nearby hospital shortly afterwards. How-

ever, doctors declared Rath dead. Following the incident, the West Bengal Police constituted an SIT to probe the murder and subsequently arrested two accused from Uttar Pradesh and an alleged sharpshooter from Buxar in Bihar. The case was later handed over to the CBI because of the gravity and sensitivity of the crime. After re-registering the matter as a regular case, the CBI invoked several sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, including Section 103(1) relating to murder, Section 61(a) pertaining to criminal conspiracy and Section 111(2)(a) concerning organised crime. The agency has also invoked Sections 25 and 27 of the Arms Act in connection with the case. Further investigation in the matter is currently underway.

Odisha CM issues 8-point directive to cut fuel use amid West Asia crisis

BHUBANESWAR, MAY 21

In view of the fuel crisis triggered by the conflict in West Asia, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Thursday issued eight directives to significantly reduce the use of petrol and diesel in government offices across the state. According to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), CM Majhi also directed Chief Secretary Anu Garg to take appropriate measures to reduce the use of petrol and diesel across government departments. Majhi directed the authorities to ensure the conduct of various official meetings, review sessions, training pro-

grammes, and workshops in virtual mode unless physical presence is absolutely necessary. As per the instructions, in cases where in-person attendance is essential, only those officers and employees whose presence is required will attend physically, while others will participate virtually. CM Majhi also directed that from June 1, 2026, onwards, all newly purchased two-wheelers and four-wheelers for government offices must be electric vehicles (EVs). "Permission to purchase petrol or diesel vehicles will only be granted under special circumstances. Likewise, all four-wheelers hired on a rental basis



for government offices from June 1 onwards must also be EVs," the Chief Minister directed. The CM instructed that senior officers who have been allotted government vehicles for personal official use have to adopt carpooling. Accordingly, the fuel alloca-

tion for such vehicle usage will also be reduced by half. The Finance Department will issue guidelines within 15 days specifying which categories of senior officers will be eligible to use government vehicles on a personal basis. Officials and employees have been instructed to use buses or trains for transportation while travelling to distant locations on official duty. Meanwhile, the Finance Department has been directed to formulate guidelines regarding the use of personal electric vehicles owned by officers for official purposes. The Chief Minister also stated that electric buses or mini-bus services will be

arranged for government employees commuting from areas with a high concentration of staff members. All government offices have been asked to take well-planned measures to ensure at least a 10 per cent reduction in monthly petrol and diesel consumption for government vehicle operations. The Chief Minister has directed strict implementation of these guidelines across all levels of government, from the State Secretariat to sub-divisional offices, tahasil and block-level offices, as well as in all government undertakings, institutions, universities, and committees across the state.

Amit Shah Recalls Emotional Meeting With Bastar Tribals

NEW DELHI, MAY 21

Union Home Minister Amit Shah shared a deeply moving experience from his recent visit to Bastar, Chhattisgarh, where he interacted with nearly 400 tribal people, describing it as a source of profound personal satisfaction that surpasses the applause of massive public rallies. In a heartfelt post on his X handle, accompanied by a touching video of the interaction, Amit Shah revealed the emotional connection he felt while walking and interacting with the tribal communities. "For an individual who

works with sensitivity in the realm of politics, the sight of a glimmer of hope on the faces of our tribal brothers and sisters brings a sense of self-satisfaction that far exceeds the gratification derived from delivering a speech before hundreds of thousands," he said. The Home Minister was in the region to inaugurate the 'Shaheed Gundadhur Seva Dera' in Netnar village, named in honour of the martyr Gundadhur. He described how the faces of tribal men, women, and children reflected a new ray of hope, especially now that Bastar has been freed from the clutches of Naxal violence.



Amit Shah emphasised that for a sensitive political worker, the fulfilment of engaging directly with tribal people face-to-face holds far greater value than addressing large crowds at political gatherings. One moment in particular stood out in both his post and the shared video. Amit Shah recounted an emotional conversation with a young girl from Bastar who told him, "Hum Bach Gaye" ("We survived"), referring to the end of Naxal terror in the area. "When a little girl from Bastar tells me, after it has become free of Naxals, 'We survived', that joy surpasses millions of joys," he said, visibly moved by her words. The video shows the Home Minister mingling warmly with tribal families, listening to their stories, and sharing smiles that reflected the transformation in the region. After years of fear and conflict, the tribals of Bastar are now experiencing peace, development, and renewed hope -- something Amit Shah said fills his heart with unmatched contentment. This

rare glimpse into the Home Minister's thoughts highlights his personal commitment towards the welfare of tribal communities. By choosing to spend meaningful time with them rather than focusing solely on large public events, Amit Shah has sent a message of empathy and dedication. The initiative to set up service centres like 'Gundadhur Seva Dera' reflects the government's commitment to bringing governance and development to the remotest tribal areas, ensuring that the fruits of peace reach those who suffered the most during the dark days of Naxalism.

air India flight operated from Bengaluru to Delhi was involved in an engine fire incident after landing at Delhi airport on Thursday. Air India confirmed an incident involving Flight AI2802 operating from Bengaluru to Delhi. "During the aircraft's final approach into Delhi, the cockpit crew received a fire indication from one of the engines. The indication was subsequently confirmed as true. The crew followed all standard operating procedures and landed the aircraft safely at Delhi airport. All passengers and crew are safe and have disembarked normally," said Air India on X. The airline declared a "full emergency" at the airport following the engine fire alarm. Air India further said it is "currently gathering additional information and working closely with the relevant au-



Air India flight lands amid 'full emergency' at Delhi airport over engine fire indication

NEW DELHI, MAY 21

An Air India flight operated from Bengaluru to Delhi was involved in an engine fire incident after landing at Delhi airport on Thursday. Air India confirmed an incident involving Flight AI2802 operating from Bengaluru to Delhi.

"Further updates will be shared as more details become available," the airline said. Earlier in the day, an Air India flight operating from Delhi to Bengaluru suffered a tail-strike incident during landing, according to the airline. The Air India flight AI2651, with 179 people on board, was grounded after it experienced a tail strike during landing at the Bengaluru airport. The airline said the aircraft landed safely and all passengers and crew members disembarked normally. Following the incident, the aircraft has been grounded for a detailed inspection. Air India added that the matter will be investigated in line with established procedures. Due to the grounding of the aircraft, the return flight AI2652 from Bengaluru to Delhi was cancelled. The airline said alternative arrangements are being made to accommodate affected passengers at the earliest.

EDITORIAL

**INSTITUTIONAL CONDEMNATION
WITHOUT DUE PROCESS:
THE CHILLING EFFECT OF THE SUPREME
COURT'S RECENT RHETORIC**

While it remains the absolute and undisputed prerogative of the courts to penalize acts of criminal contempt, the consistency with which they have successfully isolated genuinely contemptuous, bad-faith attacks from constitutionally protected, robust criticism—particularly when voiced by journalists, legal practitioners, civil society activists, and academic scholars—has varied widely over the years. This structural inconsistency persists primarily because the judiciary has repeatedly struggled to draw clear, predictable, and uniform lines distinguishing fair and merely exaggerated criticism from politically motivated, defamatory commentary, or speech that actively obstructs the administration of justice. To be fair, the modern judiciary operates under a barrage of coordinated misinformation, intense political pressure, toxic and abusive online discourse, and a noticeable decline in public institutional trust, all while the systemic mechanisms through which sitting judges can formally defend themselves or respond to these external attacks remain highly restricted. Furthermore, it is critical to acknowledge that rhetorical excess or off-the-cuff remarks made during oral observations from the Bench should not be automatically conflated with established, binding legal doctrine. However, a series of recent, highly charged comments emanating directly from the Bench have inadvertently created the deeply troubling public perception of a judiciary becoming increasingly defensive and intolerant of external scrutiny.

Just last week, while presiding over a regular petition filed by an aggrieved lawyer who was contesting his non-elevation to a senior rank, Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant triggered intense debates by describing certain disruptive actors within the broader legal ecosystem as “parasites” and labeling certain young lawyers who engage in Right to Information (RTI)-based legal activism as “cockroaches.” Even though the CJI subsequently issued a clarification explaining that his severe remarks were intended exclusively for individuals entering professional fields using completely bogus or fraudulent educational degrees, rather than genuine critics of the judicial branch, the deployment of such deeply derogatory language remains entirely unbecoming of the highest judicial office in the country. Unfortunately, this harsh verbal tenor closely follows the controversial Supreme Court handling of the NCERT textbook dispute. In that matter, the apex court focused its manifest institutional ire on three prominent academics who had been involved in drafting the contested curriculum chapters, effectively excluding them from future work on public school textbooks without granting them a fair, prior administrative hearing. This punitive action quickly evoked widespread concerns across the legal fraternity about the Supreme Court simultaneously acting as both the aggrieved party and the final arbiter in its own cause. Similarly, in the Ali Khan Mahmudabad matter, while the Court did grant the individual essential relief from immediate coercive state action, it simultaneously imposed an extensive gag order on his speech. In a further display of its growing willingness to discipline the subjective norms of public conduct rather than strictly determining cold legality, the Bench actively urged the state government to decline to prosecute him as a mere concession, rather than ruling on the underlying statutory merits.

When a sitting Chief Justice of India broadcasts comments of this nature outside the structured boundaries of formal, coded contempt proceedings, they inevitably project a profound chilling effect across civil society, as they amount to a form of severe institutional condemnation completely stripped of the standard safeguards of due process. The Court's dismissive comments regarding the strategic utilization of the RTI Act as a valid basis for legal activism carry an equally damaging effect, ignoring the reality that the Act is a thoroughly legitimate, statutory instrument designed specifically for public transparency. This defensive institutional posture was on full display recently when a journalist, who also possesses a formal law degree, officially sought standard administrative data regarding the volume of complaints filed against specific sitting judges. The Supreme Court Registry initially declined the request by flatly denying the very existence of any such institutional information. However, when the journalist successfully produced an official Law Ministry disclosure that proved the exact contrary, the Registry's legal representative quickly shifted positions, dubbing the transparency inquiry as a mere “fishing and roving” expedition. This moving of the legal goalposts demonstrated a distinct under-concern with core legality, while once again raising troubling questions about the Court aggressively arguing its own case as a litigant rather than an impartial forum. In stark contrast, former CJI D.Y. Chandrachud had frequently reminded the fraternity that judges are fundamentally public actors exercising potent state power, and therefore, courts must never react defensively to every line of public criticism. That mature, open attitude significantly improved how the bar, the press, and the academy experienced and interacted with the courts. Regrettably, the aggressive rhetoric witnessed in recent weeks has effectively set the institutional clock back.

Stray Dogs and the City That Forgot Its Boundaries

There is a point at which a recurring civic inconvenience stops being “news” and begins to resemble a condition of normal life. India may have reached that point with stray dog attacks. In 2026 alone, the numbers tell a story that is no longer easily contained within administrative language. Udaipur recorded nearly 1,750 dog bite cases. Tamil Nadu reported over 2.63 lakh cases in just four months, with 17 deaths.

The Court Draws a Line the Administration Would Not: Against this backdrop, the Supreme Court's intervention on the 19th carries a weight that goes beyond jurisprudence. It is, in effect, a reminder that governance is not a philosophical idea but a daily obligation. The bench made a principle unmistakably clear: the right to life under Article 21 is hollow if citizens cannot walk their streets without fear. Public space, in that sense, is not merely physical—it is

A Crisis That Was Not Sudden, Only Ignored: It would be convenient to treat this as a sudden urban crisis. It is not. It has been assembling itself slowly, in plain sight. Stray dog populations do not rise by accident. They rise when sterilisation remains sporadic, underfunded, and unevenly enforced. But there is a quieter accelerant—urban waste left uncollected, unsegregated, and uncontained. Cities have unintentionally built a parallel food economy for stray animals and then expressed surprise at its consequences. Abandonment of pet dogs adds another layer, blurring the boundary between domestic responsibility and public burden. Meanwhile, fragmented implementation ensures that one neighbourhood is controlled while the next is not, creating pockets of imbalance that steadily expand. Urban growth has done the rest—shrinking open ecosystems and pushing animals and humans into an increasingly shared, contested space.

This debate is often forced into a false moral binary—animal welfare versus human safety. But governance rarely fails because of ethics. It fails because of coordination. No single intervention can resolve this. Sterilisation without waste management is theatre. Vaccination without tracking is incomplete protection. Relocation without infrastructure merely shifts the problem across boundaries. What is required is not intensity alone, but continuity—systems that do not reset every financial year or administrative cycle. Sensitive public infrastructure must be physically protected, not symbolically declared safe. Public health awareness around immediate post-bite treatment must become instinctive knowledge, not periodic messaging. And enforcement must move from procedural compliance to measurable outcomes. Because in governance, intent is not the metric. Implementation is.

India's growing stray dog crisis has moved beyond isolated civic complaints into a major public safety challenge, prompting the Supreme Court to intervene with strong directions aimed at protecting citizens' right to live without fear in public spaces. Rising dog bite cases, rabies deaths, weak sterilisation systems, poor waste management, and inconsistent enforcement have together exposed deep gaps in urban governance across the country.



In Bhilwara, 42 people were bitten in a single day. Across states—from Maharashtra to Uttar Pradesh and Delhi—rabies has continued to claim lives, often not because it is incurable, but because treatment arrives too late or not at all.

Then there are the moments that refuse to dissolve into statistics. In Karnataka's Vijayapura, CCTV footage of a child being attacked by a pack of stray dogs travelled across the country with unsettling familiarity. It was not shocking because it was rare. It was shocking because it was recognisable. At some point, repetition stops being coincidence and starts becoming evidence.

psychological. Its directions are firm. Stray dogs must be removed from sensitive institutions such as schools, hospitals, and railway stations. Sterilised animals cannot simply be returned to the same vulnerable zones. Rabid or dangerously aggressive dogs may be humanely euthanised under veterinary oversight. District-level animal birth control systems must be strengthened, and anti-rabies vaccines must not be allowed to become intermittent supplies in a system that demands continuity. What the Court has done, in essence, is reintroduce accountability into a space where it had quietly dissolved.

What the Numbers Do Not Say:

India's reported dog bite burden—estimated in the tens of millions annually—captures scale but not experience. For many children, the street is no longer neutral space. It is negotiated territory. For the elderly, routine movement has acquired hesitation. For commuters, even short distances carry an element of unpredictability. But the deeper fear is not the bite itself. It is what follows it. Rabies does not forgive delay. It exploits delay. There is also a quieter erosion at work: the shrinking of everyday freedom. When ordinary movement begins to require caution, the idea of “normal life” itself is subtly altered. And then there is the urban by-product rarely acknowledged in policy notes—sudden braking, minor accidents, disrupted traffic flow, and neighbourhood garbage sites that double as informal ecosystems of risk. A city, in such a state, does not feel unsafe in dramatic ways. It feels persistently uneasy.

The City as a Moral Test: Stray dogs are not the subject of this crisis. The city is. They have become a mirror reflecting the quality of urban order—its gaps, its hesitations, its unfinished responsibilities. The Supreme Court's intervention restores something essential: the idea that fear in public space is not acceptable collateral of urban life. This is not a judgement against animals. It is a judgement against drift. But even the strongest judicial language cannot substitute for administrative rhythm. Unless implementation becomes consistent rather than reactive, this will remain a cycle of outrage followed by forgetting.



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Between Care and Collapse:

International Biodiversity Day - May 22

Sustainable Development is Possible Through Biodiversity Conservation

International Day for Biological Diversity is observed every year on May 22 to raise awareness about the need to protect nature and living organisms. Biodiversity refers to the variety of plants, animals, microorganisms, and ecosystems that support life on Earth. The theme for Biodiversity Day 2026 is “Acting locally for global impact.” It highlights that even small local actions can bring about positive changes worldwide. Biodiversity provides humans with essential resources such as food, medicines, clean water, energy, and raw materials. Forests, oceans, wetlands, and grasslands help regulate the climate, maintain soil fertility, and reduce the impact of natural disasters. Sustainable development depends on biodiversity because healthy ecosystems support economic development and human well-being. Loss of biodiversity leads to ecological imbalance, food shortages, and climate-related problems. Biodiversity conservation also supports the livelihoods of millions of people worldwide through agriculture and tourism. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals promote the protection of ecosystems and the responsible use of natural resources.

Biodiversity loss is becoming a major global issue that is affecting sustainable development and human life. According to the United Nations, due to human activities such as deforestation, pollution, climate change, and overexploitation of natural resources, around 1 million species are currently at risk of extinction. Due to deforestation alone, approximately 10 million hectares of forest land are lost every year worldwide. Biodiversity loss reduces food security because nearly 75% of global food crops depend on pollinators such as bees and butterflies, which are rapidly declining. The decline in marine biodiversity affects the livelihoods of more than 3 billion people who depend on oceans for food and income. Loss of biodiversity weak-

ens ecosystems and increases the risk of floods, droughts, and natural disasters. It also negatively impacts agriculture, tourism, fisheries, and healthcare sectors, thereby slowing down sustainable development. Scientists estimate that ecosystem degradation could cause losses worth trillions of dollars annually to the global economy in the future.

Countries such as Brazil, Indonesia, Colombia, India, and Australia are known as megadiverse countries because they contain tropical forests, unique wildlife, and diverse ecosystems. Brazil alone is home to about 10% of the world's known species and has the vast Amazon rainforest. Colombia has the highest number of bird species in the world, with more than 1,900 recorded species. India is recognized as one of the 17 megadiverse countries. Indonesia is one of the richest countries in marine biodiversity, with more than 3,000 fish species. On the other hand, countries facing severe biodiversity loss include Haiti, Madagascar, and Afghanistan. These countries are affected by deforestation, habitat destruction, climate change, and pollution. Haiti has lost about 98% of its original forest cover, leading to severe environmental damage. Madagascar is home to more than 90% unique species found nowhere else in the world. In some industrialized countries, natural habitats and biodiversity have declined due to pollution and urbanization. Ongoing biodiversity loss could threaten global food security, clean water availability, climate balance, and sustainable development worldwide.

Worldwide, several international organizations are actively working to protect biodiversity and conserve ecosystems. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) operates in more than 100 countries to protect nature and wildlife. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) maintains the “Red List,” which has assessed more than 160,000 species, of

which over 44,000 species are classified as threatened. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) supports more than 190 countries in environmental protection and sustainable development initiatives. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has 196 member countries working together to conserve biodiversity and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources. Greenpeace conducts global campaigns against deforestation, pollution, and climate change to protect ecosystems. The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) carries out conservation projects in about 60 countries to protect important wildlife habitats. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) promotes sustainable agriculture and helps conserve crop diversity essential for food security.

Biodiversity in India Although India covers only 2.4% of the world's land area, it hosts about 7-8% of the globally recorded species. The country has approximately 91,000 animal species and 45,500 plant species, many of which are found nowhere else in the world. India has four global biodiversity hotspots: the Himalayas, Western Ghats, Indo-Burma, and Sunderland regions. According to India's 7th National Biodiversity Report (2026), the country's forest and tree cover is about 827,357 square kilometres, which is 25.17% of its geographical area. Currently, India has 58 tiger reserves, 106 national parks, and 574 wildlife sanctuaries. Recent data shows that India is home to about 3,682 tigers, more than 22,446 wild elephants, 891 Asiatic lions, and over 4,000 one-horned rhinoceroses. The country also has 98 Ramsar wetlands, which help conserve water birds and aquatic biodiversity. Scientists continue to discover new species, especially in Northeast India and the Western Ghats, indicating that many ecosystems are still not fully explored. Biodiversity in India plays a crucial role in agriculture, climate regulation,

medicine, tourism, and sustainable development.

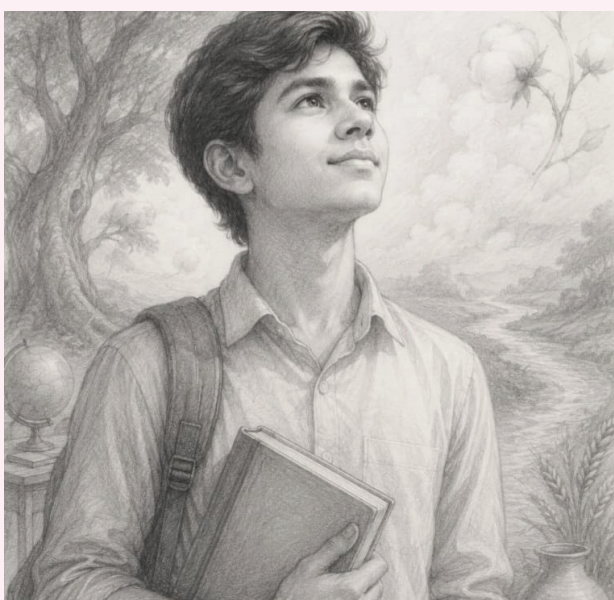
Conservation and Sustainable Development Protecting biodiversity is essential for achieving sustainable development and maintaining ecological balance. Governments must increase forest conservation, as forests currently absorb about 30% of global carbon emissions and provide habitat for millions of species. Expanding protected areas is also important. Currently, about 17% of global land and 8% of oceans are under protection through national parks and conservation areas. Afforestation and reforestation programs help restore degraded land and reduce the impacts of climate change. Reducing pollution and plastic waste is necessary, as more than 11 million tons of plastic enter oceans every year, harming marine biodiversity. Sustainable agriculture should be promoted, as nearly 40% of the Earth's land surface is used for agriculture; improper management can damage natural habitats. Artificial breeding programs and wildlife protection laws are also essential for conserving endangered species. To reduce greenhouse gas emissions that threaten ecosystems, governments and organizations should promote the use of renewable energy. Public awareness and environmental education can encourage communities to actively participate in biodiversity conservation efforts.



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NOBODY SAYS!



Amidst the colors of banners and cheers,
Let students rise, cast off their fears.
Hand in hand, let truth be sought,
For wisdom blooms in minds well-taught.

Like fragrant meals that tempt the street,
Let passion guide where heartbeats meet.
First, refine the soul within,
For culture shapes where dreams begin.

In classrooms filled with earth and clay,
Let learning light the darkest way.
Like rivers pure, let hearts remain,
Like steadfast trees, through sun and rain.

The nectar sweet of humankind,
A taste for all, both heart and mind.
Like golden grain to quell our need,
No wisdom lost, no wasted seed.

Let winds of peace your soul embrace,
Let wisdom bloom with gentle grace.
Like cotton buds that drift and twine,
Unravel truths both deep and fine.



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

Three Bishnoi Gang Members Held in Haridwar Over Pune Firing Case

PUNE: (MAY 21)

Pimpri Chinchwad police have arrested three persons allegedly linked to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang from Uttarakhand for allegedly firing at a furniture shop owner in the district after he did not meet the gang's demand for extortion money. The accused were identified as Parveen Ramniwas (22) from Jhajjar, Pankaj Kuldeep (21) from Rohtak and Sagar Ajaypal (21) from Sonapat in Haryana. All three were nabbed from Haridwar, an official said.

According to police, businessman Jagdish Bheraram Bishnoi and his partner Ashok Kumar Bishnoi received a WhatsApp call from an international number on May 7. The caller demanded Rs 2 crore and threatened to kill them if the amount was not paid.

NTA Faces Tough Questions Over NEET Leak and Exam Reforms

NEW DELHI, MAY 21

Amid growing concerns over alleged irregularities in the NEET examination process following the recent paper leak controversy, Director General of the National Testing Agency (NTA), Abhishek Singh, on Thursday appeared before a Parliamentary Standing Committee to provide a detailed briefing on the NEET-UG paper leak and the corrective measures being undertaken to reform the examination system. Education Secretary Vineet Joshi was also present during the deliberations, which began at 11 am and continued for nearly five hours. According to sources, members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee raised several questions regarding the NEET-UG paper leak and discussed measures required to make the NTA examination process more robust and transparent.

The committee sought detailed information regarding the transition of NEET-UG from the traditional pen-and-paper mode to a computer-based test (CBT) format beginning next year.

Members reportedly questioned officials about the preparedness of the computer-based testing infrastructure, the frequency and duration of examinations, security protocols, and other operational parameters necessary to ensure a smooth and credible transition.

Speaking to ANI after the meeting, Digvijaya Singh, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, stated that the meeting had gone "very well" and that valuable inputs were received from all members. He noted that all committee members were "very concerned" about the issues discussed, particularly those relating to the NTA examination system. However, he declined to reveal specific details of the discussions at this stage. When asked about future plans and when the committee's findings might be presented, Digvijaya Singh responded that "it depends" and added, "let's see," regarding the timeline for the next meeting.

Sources familiar with the proceedings stated that the NTA Di-

rector General provided detailed responses concerning the present status of the investigations into the paper leak as well as the future safeguards planned to prevent such incidents.

According to sources, committee members posed sharp questions regarding the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak and demanded clarity on measures being adopted to strengthen the NTA's testing mechanisms. The NTA, which conducts centralized entrance examinations for various undergraduate courses across the country, came under intense scrutiny following the controversy.

The Parliamentary panel also reviewed the implementation status of the National Testing Agency reform recommendations made by the K. Radhakrishnan Committee. Sources indicated that members specifically questioned officials about administrative lapses, accountability, and responsibility for the paper leak incident.

Officials reportedly informed the committee that a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation is currently underway and

is expected to identify loopholes in the system. They also assured the panel that efforts are being intensified to make the examination process more secure and foolproof in the future.

Apart from examination reforms, the committee also discussed the growing impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the education sector. Deliberations focused on strategies to improve student employability and skill development in response to rapid technological advancements and changing industry requirements.

During the same session, the committee considered and adopted two major reports — the 379th Report on Action Taken by the Government regarding the Demands for Grants 2025–26 of the Ministry of Women & Child Development, and the 380th Report concerning the functioning of the National Council for Teacher Education in the context of the teacher capacity-building goals outlined under the National Education Policy 2020.

The panel further deliberated on the achievements and challenges faced by Aligarh Muslim

University and the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions. Discussions reportedly covered key issues including financial constraints, implementation of reservation policies, filling of administrative vacancies, and challenges related to the implementation of the National Education Policy.

Political tensions have continued to escalate amid widespread protests over NEET-UG 2026, which was cancelled on May 12 following allegations of a coordinated paper leak. The examination, conducted on May 3 across 551 cities in India and 14 cities abroad, witnessed participation from more than 22 lakh candidates.

In response to the controversy, the Union Education Ministry has directed authorities to implement strengthened security measures for the upcoming re-examination scheduled for June 21. Officials have also confirmed that NEET-UG will shift entirely to a computer-based test (CBT) format from next year in an effort to curb irregularities and enhance examination security.

General Manager Ashutosh Pant Conducts Comprehensive Inspection

Fire Safety Arrangements at BLW Shop Floor

VARANASI, MAY 21:

General Manager of Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW), Shri Ashutosh Pant, today carried out a detailed inspection of the Loco Frame Shop, Loco Assembly Shop, and Loco Test Shop to review fire safety and protection arrangements. During the inspection, he examined the fire-fighting equipment, safety resources, and emergency response systems available at various workplaces and assessed their operational readiness and effectiveness. The General Manager instructed officers and employees to remain constantly vigilant and alert towards safety and stated that safety is the highest priority at BLW. He emphasized that all systems and arrangements must remain fully functional and updated to effectively handle any kind of emergency situation. Shri Pant stressed the importance of regular inspection

of fire safety equipment, conducting periodic mock drills, and providing safety-related training to employees. He also issued necessary directions to further strengthen workplace safety, cleanliness, safe electrical systems, and safety awareness. During the inspection, Principal Chief Mechanical Engineer Shri Vivek Sheel, Chief Design Engineer/Electrical Shri Anurag Kumar Gupta, Chief Electrical Engineer/Loco Shri Arvind Kumar Jain, Chief Safety Officer Shri Jitendra Agrawal, Deputy General Manager Shri Sagar, along with officers and employees of the concerned departments, were present. Shri Ashutosh Pant stated that a safe work culture and safety vigilance form the foundation of success for any industrial organization and that BLW is working with complete commitment towards maintaining the highest safety standards.

Collapsed Bihar bridge gets a bridge to bridge it

Bihar authorities are building temporary Bailey bridges over the collapsed part of the Vikramshila Setu in Bhagalpur. The Bailey bridges are expected to restore limited movement from June 5 after safety checks and completion of the remaining structures.



that the temporary structure is expected to become operational by June 5, according to news reports.

The Vikramshila Setu, which is Bihar's key bridge over the Ganga river, broke on May 4 after a Reinforced Cement Concrete (RCC) slab collapsed. The incident led to a complete halt of traffic movement, severely affecting connectivity between Bhagalpur and the districts in north Bihar.

TWO MORE BAILEY BRIDGES TO BE CONSTRUCTED ON THE COLLAPSED SECTION OF VIKRAMSHILA SETU

Following the collapse of a section of the bridge, structural and safety audits were conducted by teams from the BRO, Military Engineering Services (MES), IITS, Bihar Rajya Pul Nirman Nigam Limited (BRPNL), and the National Highway Division, reported The Times of India.

Authorities later decided to

construct three Bailey bridges on the damaged portions of the Setu as a temporary solution to restore connectivity.

The installation of one Bailey bridge has now been completed, while work on the remaining two bridges is progressing rapidly.

According to The Times of India, nearly 100 BRO personnel, including engineers, mechanical staff, and technical experts, have been deployed for the operation. Iron frames, girder beams, cranes, and other heavy machinery were transported from BRO centres in the northeast to Bhagalpur over the past week.

Bhagalpur District Magistrate (DM) Nawal Kishor Choudhary said that the BRO is working on a "war footing" to restore traffic movement at the earliest.

"The work to build a Bailey bridge on the collapsed section of Vikramshila Setu has started and is being carried out on a war footing by the BRO," DM Choudhary was quoted as saying by The Times of India.

Over 1.59 lakh beneficiaries availed Punjab govt's Mukh Mantri Sehat Yojana so far

The scheme operates under the updated HBP 2.2 framework and covers nearly 2,300 health benefit packages across 839 empanelled hospitals, including both government and private healthcare facilities. In addition, 98 specialised treatment packages have been reserved exclusively for government hospitals.



More than 1.59 lakh beneficiaries have already availed treatment under the Bhagwant Mann-led Punjab government's Mukh Mantri Sehat Yojana, which offers cashless healthcare coverage of up to Rs 10 lakh per family manually. Additionally, over 3.11 lakh medical procedures have been carried out so far under the scheme, with the total value of treatment support crossing Rs 522 crore. Punjab Health Minister Dr Balbir Singh said the initiative aims to ensure that no resident is denied healthcare because of financial constraints. "From complex surgeries and heart procedures to dialysis, neonatal care, and critical illness treatments, the aim is that no one should be denied care because

they cannot afford it. The Bhagwant Mann Government's Mukh Mantri Sehat Yojana offers cashless health coverage of up to Rs 10 lakh per family annually to all bona fide residents of Punjab, including middle-class families, government employees, and pensioners," he said. The scheme operates under the updated HBP 2.2 framework and covers nearly 2,300 health benefit packages across 839 empanelled hospitals, including both government and private healthcare facilities. In addition, 98 specialised treatment packages have been reserved exclusively for government hospitals. Officials said the scheme covers a wide range of treatments, including surgeries, cancer care, dialysis, emergency services, neonatal care,

and critical illness management. It also includes pre-hospitalisation tests and post-treatment recovery expenses, reducing additional financial burdens on families. The government has also expanded registration access through common service centres, government hospitals, district offices, and outreach camps. Residents can enrol using basic identification documents such as Aadhaar and voter ID cards. Awareness and enrolment under the scheme are also rising steadily across the state. More than 44 lakh health cards have already been issued, with districts including Ludhiana, Patiala, and Jalandhar witnessing particularly high participation.

A 2021 study published in Applied Health Economics and Health Policy highlighted how healthcare expenses in India often push families into long-term financial distress, particularly in cases involving major illnesses such as cancer and heart disease. The study noted that high out-of-pocket medical expenditure frequently forces families into debt and poverty.



GM/Construction Conducts Safety Inspection

Reviews Progress of Balurghat-Hili New Line Project

Maligaon, 21 May, 2026: Shri Ashish Bansal, General Manager/Construction of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) conducted a comprehensive safety inspection and detailed review of ongoing developmental works in the Eklakhi - Balurghat and Balurghat - Hili sections during his visit on 20th May, 2026. The inspection focused on assessment of railway infrastructure, track conditions, station development works, bridges, passenger amenities, operational preparedness and overall progress of construction activities under the Balurghat - Hili New Broad Gauge Line Project.

The Balurghat - Hili New Broad Gauge Line Project, having a total length of 29.257 km in Dakshin Dinajpur district of West Bengal, is being executed at an anticipated cost of Rs. 1181.09 crore. The project aims to strengthen rail connectivity in the region and accelerate socio-economic development. For execution of the project, 100% land acquisition covering 156.38 hectares has already been completed and the land has been handed over to Railways. The project includes construction of 11 major bridges, 43 minor bridges, station buildings, road over bridges (ROB), road under bridges (RUB), staff quarters, track formation and other related railway infrastructure works. Various developmental activities are progressing continuously in different

sections of the project to ensure timely completion. The target date for completion of the project has been fixed as March 2027.

During the inspection, special emphasis was laid on safety standards, quality of construction works, progress of bridge works, station infrastructure, utility shifting and operational preparedness to ensure safe and reliable train operations in future. The General Manager also reviewed progress of important infrastructure works being executed under the project, including major bridges, minor bridges, road over bridges, road under bridges and station-related development works. Ongoing Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) works in the Balurghat - Kumedpur and Labha - Kumedpur sections were also assessed during the inspection.

On 21st May, 2026, trolley inspection activities also continued for further review of safety aspects and progress of ongoing developmental works in the section. Senior officials from Headquarters along with Katihar divisional officials accompanied the inspection programme. The visit reflects Northeast Frontier Railway's continued commitment towards strengthening railway infrastructure, enhancing safety standards and accelerating developmental activities for providing safer, faster and more efficient rail services across the region.

Jan Samvad programme in Ladwa

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Thursday heard 338 public grievances during the Jan Samvad programme organised at Shivala Ramkundi in Ladwa, Kurukshetra district, and warned of strict action against officials and individuals harassing citizens or delaying public work.

During the programme, the Chief Minister directed action against an SDO accused of getting electricity poles and a transformer installed in the middle of a farm pathway in village Bakali. He ordered the SDM of Ladwa to investigate the matter and submit a report. Former Minister of State Subhash Sudha was also present at the event.

The issue came to light after a complainant informed the Chief Minister that he had purchased nearly seven acres of land several years ago and the pathway to the fields was part of the official ownership record. However, some people allegedly colluded with the SDO to install electricity infrastructure on the pathway, causing obstruction to access. The complainant also alleged that he had been receiving

CM hears 338 grievances. Warns strict action against those threatening complainant
Action to be taken against SDO for installing poles and transformer on farm pathway- Chief Minister
Government to act against officials and employees who make citizens visit offices repeatedly
Rs 807 crore spent on development works in Ladwa Assembly constituency during the last 11-and-a-half years
Out of 74 CM announcements, work on 38 completed, 364 houses constructed under PM Awas Yojana

threats. Taking serious note of the matter, the Chief Minister instructed the police to register a case against those responsible for threatening the complainant and assured strict action.

Addressing officers and employees present at the programme, the Chief Minister said the government would not tolerate situations where citizens are forced to repeatedly visit government offices for the same work. He directed officials to ensure timely disposal of complaints and warned that negligence in public service delivery would invite strict disciplinary action. The Chief Minister said the Jan Samvad platform reflects the government's commitment to public welfare, transparency, and continuous development. He added that both the policy and intent of the government are focused entirely on the welfare and upliftment of citizens. He also urged people to mention their mobile numbers in complaint applications to enable depart-



Haryana Chief Minister, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini addressing the grievances of the people during the Jan Samvad programme organised at Ladwa, in Kurukshetra district on May 21, 2026.

ments to directly contact them regarding grievance redressal. Several grievances related to education, roads, electricity, and public infrastructure were addressed during the programme. Responding to a request from Jasbir Singh of Dhanora Jattan village, the Chief Minister said the government would examine the feasibility of upgrading the local school up to Class XII. On another complaint, he directed the Marketing Board to complete the road connecting Khirki Viran and Rudki villages before the monsoon season to avoid inconvenience to residents of six nearby villages.

He also instructed Public Works Department officials to complete road construction work in Kanipla village before the rainy season. The Education Department was directed to expedite online name correction processes and ensure admission of a child in a private school under the Right to Education provisions. In another case, the Chief Minister ordered immediate replacement of a transformer installed in the fields of Balvinder Singh of Kalirano village. He also instructed officials to install a new transformer to replace one stolen from the fields of Bhagat Singh in Muniyarpur village.

Highlighting development works in the Ladwa Assembly constituency, the Chief Minister said Rs.807 crore had been spent on various projects during the last 11-and-a-half years, compared to Rs.310 crore spent during the previous Congress government's ten-year tenure. He said drinking water pipelines had been laid in 65 villages at a cost of Rs.11.51 crore. The Saharanpur-Kurukshetra road in Ladwa town had been widened into a four-lane road at a cost of Rs.10.20 crore. An SDM office building is also under construction at a cost of Rs.16.20 crore. Under Chief Minister announcements, Rs.16.37 crore was allocated to the Municipal Committee, Ladwa, for various development projects, of which Rs.7.52 crore has already been spent while the remaining works are in progress. Development projects worth Rs.2.46 crore have also been completed under the Divya Nagar Scheme. The Chief

Minister further said that under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, 364 houses have been constructed in the constituency while work on 249 more houses is currently underway. Under the Har Ghar Grihini Yojana, 9,240 families are receiving LPG cylinders at a subsidised price of Rs.500. He added that around 1.59 lakh people were found eligible under the Ayushman Chirayu Yojana, out of which 1.20 lakh beneficiaries have already received their Chirayu cards. To improve connectivity and irrigation facilities, permanent bridges are being constructed over the Rakshi river at three locations at a cost of over Rs.1.35 crore. A 2,200-foot RCC track project on the river has also been approved at a cost of Rs.3.12 crore. The Chief Minister said that out of 74 development announcements made for Ladwa Assembly constituency, work on 38 projects has already been completed while the remaining projects are progressing steadily.

Delhi-Jewar airport travel time may shrink to 21 minutes under rapid rail plan: UP minister

LUCKNOW: (May 21) Travel time between Delhi and the upcoming Noida International Airport could be reduced to 21 minutes under a proposed high-speed rail connectivity plan, Uttar Pradesh Industrial Development Minister Nand Gopal Gupta said on Thursday. Reviewing projects of the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) at PICUP Bhawan here, the minister said the detailed project report (DPR) for the Regional

Rapid Transit System (RRTS) connecting Delhi with Jewar airport has been approved by the state government and sent to the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. Officials informed the meeting that provisions have also been made in the DPR to integrate the proposed Delhi-Varanasi high-speed rail corridor with the airport terminal through a dedicated station, enabling Delhi connectivity in around 21 minutes in the future, according to a statement.

India's defence growth stands out amid widening Chinese manufacturing base: Report

WASHINGTON/BEIJING

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliance) policy has created industrial corridors, increased foreign investment caps, and built a defence-tech startup ecosystem that is already exporting, signalling a tangible and expanding capacity.

With hundreds of companies operating and more emerging, India has set a defence export target of about \$6 billion by 2029, compared to around \$80 million a decade ago, a report has mentioned. The recent meeting between US President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in Beijing served as another reminder for Washington of an industrial imbalance that still does not work in America's favour, Mike Kuiken, Vice Chair of the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, and Leland Miller, a Commissioner on the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, wrote in online magazine 'The Wire China.'

According to the American experts, China's manufacturing base now exceeds that of the US, Japan, and Germany combined. Even the United States and Europe together cannot match the Chinese industrial scale, making India "the only way the maths



begins to work". "That is not a matter of preference but strategic necessity," they said, aligning with India's own threat perceptions: "a country shaped by sustained Chinese pressure along its northern border, with defence modernisation increasingly organised around that reality."

"The US and India have been signing the right documents. Last October, the two nations agreed to a roadmap

covering joint research, co-development, supply security, and innovation bridges between American and Indian defence startups, building on years of bipartisan effort. In 2023, then-Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer used the Munich Security Conference to argue that the United States and Europe could not outcompete China alone and that India had to be at the centre of the answer," they added. Kuiken and

Miller argued that signing more documents while the system governing how the US shares defence technology with its partners remains unchanged is not the solution.

They argued that concerns reflected in Indian commentary, that increasing bilateral engagement has not translated into access to the underlying technologies, are "well justified". "The strategic argument for a deeper and more meaningful US-India partnership has been settled in Washington for three years, but the architecture has not moved. That is not principally a failure on India's side of the table; it is ours," the experts noted.

Highlighting the growing constraints in Washington in advancing the deeper cooperation with India, the report said that "what has lagged is not intent, but execution." "The bottleneck increasingly sits in Washington: export-control regimes, byzantine procurement rules, financing tools, and technology-sharing frameworks built for a different era and a different strategic environment. Until that architecture changes, the partnership will continue to operate below its potential. Every year that gap persists is another year in which Beijing consolidates its industrial and technological advantage," it noted.

Trump warns Iran over nuclear ambitions

WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump on Thursday issued a stark warning to Iran, declaring that the United States would not allow Tehran to acquire a nuclear weapon and saying failure to stop it could trigger a wider conflict stretching beyond the Middle East. Trump told reporters that preventing Iran from becoming a nuclear power was his administration's top foreign policy priority.

"We cannot let Iran have a nuclear weapon," Trump said. "You will have a nuclear war in the Middle East, and that war will come here, that war will go to Europe."

Trump said negotiations with Iran were continuing but insisted the outcome would be a decisive one way or another. "Right now we're negotiating, and we'll see. But either we're going to get it one way or the other," he said. "They're not going to have a nuclear weapon." The President also addressed reports that Iran was discussing plans with Oman to formalise toll charges on ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most crucial oil shipping lanes. Trump said the United States wanted the waterway to remain open and free for international navigation.



India, Egypt condemn Pahalgam and Red Fort attacks

NEW DELHI

India and Egypt underscored the importance of bilateral cooperation in countering terrorism, reflecting the spirit of the India-Egypt Strategic Partnership at the 5th meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) on Counter Terrorism, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Thursday. The meeting between India and Egypt was held in New Delhi on May 20.

The meeting was co-chaired by senior officials from the Ministries of External Affairs and Foreign Affairs, with the participation of relevant agencies of both countries.

"They strongly condemned the heinous terrorist attack in Pahalgam, J&K, on April 22, 2025, and the terror incident near Red Fort, New Delhi, on November 10, 2025, and stressed that all those involved in terrorist activities and their support must be held accountable and brought to justice," the MEA highlighted.

Egypt reaffirmed its solidarity with India against all forms of terrorism aimed at undermining the country's security and stability.

Both sides emphasised that confronting terrorism requires concerted action in a sustained and comprehensive manner.

Against this backdrop, the two sides renewed their commitment to strengthen multilateral cooperation in the field of countering terrorism, including in the UN, BRICS, FATF, GCTF, and other multilateral platforms.

They also exchanged views on how to enhance the effectiveness of the GCTF and reiterated their commitment to the early finalisation and adoption of the UN Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT).

Both sides reviewed a wide range of traditional and emerging threats and challenges, such as terrorist recruitment, abuse of technology for terrorist purposes, and financing of terrorism. They expressed concerns over the increasing use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), drones, and AI for terrorist purposes.

The two sides discussed ways to strengthen cooperation in areas of training and capacity building, cyber security, judicial cooperation, exchange of best practices, and information sharing through continued bilateral and multilateral efforts.

Both sides decided to hold the next meeting of the Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism in Egypt on a mutually convenient date.



Marco Rubio calls Cuba a 'failed state'

WASHINGTON

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio sharply escalated criticism of Cuba's leadership on Thursday, calling the island a "failed state" and warning that instability there directly threatens US national security.

Speaking during a media gaggle in Miami ahead of his India trip, Rubio said Cuba's political and economic system was "broken" and accused the government of blocking humanitarian assistance while enriching military-linked entities.

"Their economic system does not work. It's broken, and you can't fix it with the current political system that's in place," Rubio said. "It's a failed state." Rubio said the United States remained willing to support humanitarian relief for Cubans, but only through organisations not linked to the Cuban regime or military-controlled companies.

Nepal Opposition Demands PM's Resignation

KATHMANDU, MAY 21

Nepal's opposition parties on Thursday staged protests inside Parliament demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Balendra Shah over his continued absence from House proceedings and alleged failure to remain accountable.

Lawmakers from the Nepali Congress, Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) and Shram Sanskriti Party picketed the well of the lower house, raising slogans against the government.

Shram Sanskriti Party chief Hark Raj Rai accused the Prime Minister of ignoring Parliament and avoiding questions on issues including border concerns, the vacant Home Ministry portfolio and squatter management.

Speaker Dol Prasad Aryal warned lawmakers over violations of parliamentary decorum. Despite requests from the Speaker, Shah reportedly said he would attend Parliament at an "appropriate time."

'Taiwan remains central fault line in US-China relations'

BRUSSELS

Chinese President Xi Jinping's warning that Taiwan could lead to "clashes and even conflicts" and place relations in "great jeopardy" during his recent meeting with US President Donald Trump in Beijing was not mere rhetoric, a report has stated. As missteps in arms transfers, diplomatic recognition or military manoeuvres could trigger escalation amid little clarity in international law.

Jinping's remarks were not a fresh warning but rather underscoring the fundamental reality of US-China relations: "beneath every summit, every trade negotiation, and every climate pledge lies the unresolved question of Taiwan," Khedroob Thondup wrote in the European Times

He said that the issue remains

the enduring fault line that keeps tensions constantly simmering beneath the surface.

"The United States' 'One China' policy, born of the Nixon-Mao rapprochement in the 1970s and later formalised through the three US-China communiqués, the 1979 normalisation of relations, the Taiwan Relations Act, and the Six Assurances, deliberately left Taiwan's status ambiguous. Washington acknowledged Beijing's position but did not endorse it, while maintaining robust unofficial ties with Taipei. This ambiguity was meant to stabilise relations, but in practice it institutionalised uncertainty," Thondup stated.

"Xi's warning to Trump echoes the language of successive Chinese leaders before him. Taiwan is the 'core of core interests'. For Beijing, sovereignty is non-negotiable; for Washing-



ton, credibility in Asia requires resisting coercion," it added. According to the expert, there are several reasons that keep Taiwan at the centre of global politics.

"Starting with its geostrategic position, Taiwan sits

astride the first island chain, a maritime barrier critical to US and allied defence planning. Its semiconductor industry makes it indispensable to global supply chains. Also, it has domestic legitimacy in China," he stated. Thondup highlighted

that the Chinese Communist Party has linked its legitimacy to eventual "reunification" with Taiwan, adding that any perception of weakness on the issue risks internal instability.

He further noted that Taiwan is central to US alliance credibility, with Washington's commitments to Tokyo, Seoul, and Canberra being judged by its resolve on Taiwan. Any sign of retreat, he said, would send shock waves across the Indo-Pacific.

"Summits between Washington and Beijing follow a familiar choreography; trade concessions, military hotlines, or climate cooperation are announced, but Taiwan remains the shadow issue. Xi's blunt words to Trump underscore that beneath the surface of cooperation lies a contest over sovereignty and legitimacy," Thondup stated.

India and France committed to reinforce coordination in maritime security domain

NEW DELHI

India and France committed to reinforcing their coordination in the maritime security domain at the 8th India-France Maritime Cooperation Dialogue, said the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Thursday.

The 8th India-France Maritime Cooperation Dialogue was held in Paris on May 20. It was co-chaired by Pavan Kapoor, Deputy National Security Advisor, National Security Council Secretariat, India and Guillaume Ollagnier, Director General for International Relations and Strategy, Ministry for the Armed Forces, France and Claire Raulin, Director for Strategic Affairs, Security and Disarmament at the Ministry of Europe and Foreign

Affairs, detailed the MEA. "The discussions focused on their shared commitment to strengthening operational cooperation for countering illicit maritime activities, including piracy and armed robbery, maritime terrorism, drug trafficking, illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, as well as other hybrid threats," stated the MEA.

Both sides exchanged views on the situation in West Asia/Middle-East and the Indian Ocean. The discussions reflected strong strategic convergence and a shared vision of a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific region, based on mutual commitment to international law, respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and freedom of navigation, it added.

Trump hints at opening up Cuba

WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump on Thursday signalled a possible shift in long-standing US policy towards Cuba, saying he wanted to help revive the island nation and allow Cuban Americans to return and invest there.

Trump dismissed suggestions that the recent deployment of the USS Nimitz aircraft carrier near Cuba was meant to intimidate Havana. Instead, he described Cuba as a "failed country" facing severe economic hardship and said his administration wanted to support the Cuban people.

"No, not at all," Trump said when asked whether the aircraft carrier's arrival was intended as a warning to the Cuban government. "Cuba — look, it's a failed country. Ev-



erybody knows it. They don't have electricity. They don't have money. They don't have anything.

"They don't have food," Trump said the United States was prepared to help Cuba "on a humanitarian basis" and repeatedly praised the Cuban American community in Florida. "We have the Cuban American population, much of it living in Miami, in Florida. That's a great group of people,

amazing group of people, industrious, they're great Americans," he said.

The President added that many Cuban Americans wanted to reconnect economically with the island.

"They want to go back to their country. They want to help their country," Trump said. "They want to invest in their country and see if they can bring it back."

Trump suggested that previous administrations had failed to fundamentally alter US-Cuba relations despite decades of efforts fundamentally. "Other presidents have looked at this for 50, 60 years doing something, and it looks like I'll be the one who does it," he said.

He also said his administration wanted to "open it up to Cuban Americans where they can go back and help".

Rights body slams demolition of civilian homes by Pakistani forces in Balochistan

QUETTA

A leading human rights organisation on Thursday strongly condemned the demolition of civilian homes by the Pakistan Army in Balochistan's Awaran district.

Paank, the Baloch National Movement's Human Rights Department, mentioned that during the military operation on May 13 in the Peer Mashkai, Kallar area of Awaran, the houses of Niaz Baloch and Huzoor Bakhs Baloch were bulldozed.

"This incident reflects the ongoing policy of collective punishment being carried out across Balochistan, where entire families are targeted through enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, harassment, and destruction of property," the



rights body noted. According to the rights body, the Pakistani Army previously forcibly disappeared two sons of Niaz Baloch — Zaheer Niaz and Mehraj Niaz — on February 28, 2025. Later, the tortured and mutilated body of Mehraj Niaz was dumped on

March 3, 2025, while Zaheer Niaz was found dead on March 26, 2025. "Their killings were widely viewed as acts of extrajudicial execution and collective punishment against the family," it added. Paank called on international human rights organisa-

tions and the United Nations to take immediate notice of these grave abuses and hold the perpetrators accountable.

Highlighting the atrocities against civilians, Paank on Thursday mentioned that two civilians were forcibly disappeared by the Pakistani forces in Balochistan. The rights body mentioned that 27-year-old student Haleem Baloch was abducted from Hub Chowki on May 17, during an early-morning raid carried out by personnel of Pakistan's Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), Rangers, and Military Intelligence.

Additionally, Kiyya Baloch, a 33-year-old driver working in the UAE, was reportedly taken from his home on April 23, 2026, by Pakistan's Frontier Corps per-

sonnel. Paank expressed deep concern over the continued pattern of enforced disappearances in Balochistan, where individuals are taken without legal process and families are left in fear and uncertainty.

In a separate incident, an elderly man was killed in a firing incident, allegedly by Pakistani military forces in the Drachkoh area of Kech district, on Tuesday.

Citing local sources, the Balochistan Post reported that Pakistani forces opened fire in the area, killing a resident identified as Sher Dil. Balochistan continues to reel under relentless atrocities by the Pakistani forces, marked by enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings of Baloch civilians at an unprecedented level.

India-US trade deal likely in coming months: Sergio Gork

NEW DELHI

US Ambassador Sergio Gork on Thursday expressed immense confidence regarding the finalisation of a landmark bilateral trade deal between Washington and New Delhi in the "coming weeks and months".

Speaking at the Annual Leadership Summit of the American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM) here, Ambassador Gork said, "President Trump's goal is to facilitate bilateral trade in a way that creates lucrative opportunities for American businesses and workers." He said the current

interim trade agreement was on the table to be finalised, unlocking prosperity for both nations.

Highlighting the recent acceleration in trade talks, the Ambassador said, "Last month, an Indian delegation visited Washington, D.C. to help finalise the trade deal. Next month, a US delegation will also focus on the agreement." He further stated that the US was looking forward to completing the details of a new bilateral trade agreement with India that will expand market access, reduce barriers, and create greater certainty for businesses on both sides.

LIC Posts Robust FY26 Growth Across Key Metrics

MUMBAI, MAY 21

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) delivered a strong financial performance for the year ended March 31, 2026, reporting significant growth across major business segments. The company posted a Profit After Tax (PAT) of Rs.57,419 crore in FY26, marking a 19.25% increase compared to Rs.48,151 crore in FY25. Reflecting confidence in its financial strength, the Board of Directors recommended a final dividend of Rs.10 per equity share of Rs.10 each, equivalent to Rs.20 per share on a pre-bonus issue basis, subject to shareholder approval at the company's 5th Annual General Meeting.

LIC continued to maintain its leadership position in the Indian life insurance industry. According to IRDAI data, the corporation retained an overall market share of 56.66% based on First Year Premium Income (FYPI). LIC held a market share of 36.60% in the individual business segment and a dominant 70.11% share in group business during FY26.

The corporation's Total Premium Income rose by 9.80%

Profit After Tax at Rs.57,419 crores, an increase of 19.25% Year on Year
Board recommends final dividend of Rs.10/- per equity share of Rs. 10/- each (equivalent to Rs. 20/- per equity share pre-bonus issue basis)
Individual Business Non-Par APE increased by 43.78% to Rs.15,214 crore
Non-Par APE share within Individual Business at 35.11% for FY26 as compared to 27.69% for FY25

year-on-year to Rs.5,35,984 crore from Rs.4,88,148 crore in FY25. Individual New Business Premium increased by 8.29% to Rs.67,676 crore, while Individual Renewal Premium grew by 5.91% to Rs.2,71,699 crore. Total Individual Business Premium rose 6.37% to Rs.3,39,375 crore. Group Business Premium Income showed stronger momentum, increasing 16.26% to Rs.1,96,609 crore during the financial year.

LIC also recorded growth in policy sales. A total of 1.84 crore policies were sold in the individual segment during FY26, compared to 1.77 crore policies in the previous financial year, reflecting a growth of 3.70%.

The company achieved notable improvement in product mix and profitability metrics. On an Annualized Premium Equivalent (APE) basis, total premium stood at Rs.66,961 crore, with Individual Business



contributing Rs.43,335 crore and Group Business accounting for Rs.23,626 crore. Within individual business, the share of Non-Par products increased significantly to 35.11% from 27.69% in FY25. Individual Business Non-Par APE surged by 43.78% to Rs.15,214 crore, demonstrating LIC's strategic focus on high-margin products.

The Value of New Business (VNB), a key profitability indicator for insurance com-

panies, increased sharply by 41.63% to Rs.14,179 crore from Rs.10,011 crore in the previous year. Net VNB Margin improved by 360 basis points to 21.2%, compared to 17.6% in FY25, reflecting improved product mix and operational efficiency.

LIC's financial stability also strengthened during the year. The Solvency Ratio improved to 2.35 as of March 31, 2026, compared to 2.11 a year earlier, indicating a stronger capital position. The Overall Expense Ratio reduced by 51 basis points to 11.91%, highlighting better cost management.

Persistency ratios, which measure policy renewal performance, showed mixed trends. On premium basis, the 13th-month persistency ratio stood at 74.64%, slightly lower than 74.84% in FY25, while the 61st-month persistency ratio declined to 59.31% from 63.12%. On number of policies basis, the 13th-month persistency improved to 64.87%, but the 61st-month persistency ratio declined to 46.88%.

The corporation's Assets Under Management (AUM) increased by 5.08% year-on-year to Rs.57,29,396 crore, reaffirming LIC's position as one of the largest institutional investors in the country. Yield on policyholders' investments excluding unrealized gains improved to 8.92% during FY26 compared to 8.65% in

the previous year.

LIC also announced a bonus allocation of Rs.59,726 crore to policyholders for FY26, compared to Rs.56,190 crore in FY25, reinforcing its commitment to rewarding customers.

CEO and Managing Director Shri R Doraiswamy described FY26 as a satisfying year for LIC, driven by strong growth across all business verticals. He highlighted that the corporation achieved a Non-Par share of over 35% in individual business and a VNB margin above 21%. He also noted that the company's Bancassurance and Alternate Channels (BAC) recorded over 45% growth, with premium income from BAC exceeding Rs.5,000 crore during the year.

Doraiswamy further stated that LIC recently announced a 1:1 bonus issue to reward shareholders and is preparing to implement Indian Accounting Standards (IndAS) within the regulatory timeline. Expressing confidence in LIC's future growth prospects, he thanked nearly 200 million policyholders for their trust and support over the past seven decades.



Sensex, Nifty erase early gains as RBI rate hike fears weigh on markets

The BSE Sensex closed 135.03 points lower at 75,183.36, while the NSE Nifty50 slipped 4.30 points to end at 23,789.00.

Stock markets gave up

strong early gains on Thursday and ended lower as worries over possible RBI rate hikes, inflation risks and global uncertainty kept investors cautious despite softer crude oil prices and a stronger rupee. The BSE Sensex closed 135.03 points lower at 75,183.36, while the NSE Nifty50 slipped 4.30 points to end at 23,789.00. Markets had started the day on a strong note, with the Sensex rising over 500 points in early trade after crude oil prices fell sharply overnight following comments from US President Donald Trump that negotiations with Iran were in their "final stages". However, the rally lost momentum as investors turned cautious over the possibility of interest rate hikes by the Reserve Bank of India amid persistent inflation concerns linked to high crude oil prices.

MARKETS TURN VOLATILE AFTER STRONG START

Thursday's session also coincided with the weekly derivatives expiry for the Sensex, which typically leads to higher volatility as traders roll over or close positions. Both benchmark indices had climbed nearly 0.8% during intraday trade before paring gains. Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments Limited, said domestic equities erased early gains as concerns over possible RBI tightening and weak manufacturing data overshadowed optimism from falling crude prices. "Domestic equities erased early gains as concerns over potential RBI rate hikes and weak manufacturing PMI data outweighed optimism from softer crude prices," Nair said. "Uncertainty around US-Iran negotiations, signals

of possible domestic monetary policy tightening, and a weaker growth outlook continued to raise macro concerns," he added.

RUPEE POSTS BEST SINGLE-DAY GAIN IN TWO WEEKS

One positive trigger for markets was the rupee, which posted its best single-day gain in nearly two weeks after remaining under pressure for several sessions. The rupee had recently hit record lows amid rising crude oil prices and foreign investor outflows. A stronger rupee usually supports investor sentiment as it helps reduce imported inflation risks for an oil-importing country like India.

CRUDE OIL REMAINS KEY MARKET TRIGGER

Global crude oil prices remained volatile throughout the session. Brent crude, which had fallen 5.6% overnight, traded near \$104 per barrel on Thursday after Iran announced measures to tighten control over the Strait of Hormuz. While oil prices cooled slightly, investors remained worried about supply disruptions and the possibility of prolonged geopolitical tensions in West Asia. India imports nearly 90% of its crude oil needs, making elevated oil prices a major concern for inflation, the rupee and corporate margins. Economists at Standard Chartered recently said the RBI could begin raising interest rates as early as June due to rising inflation risks linked to crude oil and the weakening rupee. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments, said the full impact of the energy crisis may become visible in the first quarter of FY27. "The fourth quarter results have been, so far, good. The negative impact of the energy crisis will be felt in the first quarter of fiscal 2027. But if crude price continues to decline, the remaining quarters will be reasonably good," he said.

Kia India Unveils 'Kia Vibe Studio' at HYBE INDIA Pop-Up Park in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD, MAY 21

Kia India, one of the country's leading mass-premium automakers, is set to bring an immersive cultural experience to Hyderabad as part of its ongoing partnership with HYBE INDIA. Designed to celebrate creativity, self-expression, and youth culture, the initiative will come alive through the 'Kia Vibe Studio' at the Kia Engagement Zone at the HYBE INDIA Pop-Up Park. The HYBE INDIA Pop-Up Park will take place on 23rd - 24th May at The League, Financial District, Hyderabad transforming the location into a vibrant hub of music, fandom, and interactive experiences. With entries starting 04:00 pm onwards, visitors will have the opportunity to engage with a range of interactive formats, including live experiences, participative activities, and curated engagements designed to bring together entertainment and innovation in a high-energy environment.

itel A100 Pro Debuts with Military-Grade Durability at Rs 8,999

NEW DELHI, MAY 21

itel, one of the leading electronics brands famous for democratizing technology for millions of Indians, has recently launched the sensational A100 Pro smartphone. With its standout design creating buzz everywhere, it has emerged as the perfect blend of durability, style, and affordability. The A100 Pro smartphone is equipped with military grade certification (MIL-STD-810H), providing unbeatable durability and peace of mind for users. Equipped with Ultralink, it will provide connectivity even where there is no network connectivity. The A100 Pro smartphones are available with 3+5* GB RAM and 64GB ROM. With a huge consumer base of 15Cr+ customers, retail presence in more than 1.3 Lakh retail outlets and 1000+ service centres. Despite increase in global memory prices, it is available at just Rs. 8,999, making it the only brand under 10K that provides such a premium design

smartphone. itel also provides a free screen replacement within 100 days - ensuring unparalleled product quality & reliability only provided by itel in India. Commenting on the launch, Mr. Arjeet Talapatra, CEO of itel India said, "itel has always been the leader in pioneering durable, reliable and affordable products for millions of Indians. This latest launch of A100 Pro is a continuation of that legacy. With its captivating design & colours backed by strong military grade build, this smartphone is an ode to India's vibrant cultural heritage. The latest CMR Durability Index reinforces what our users already know - itel is the most durable and reliable mobile brand under 10K." The latest Cyber Media Research (CMR) report on 'The Rising Role of Durability, Reliability, and Affordability in India's Device Market has demonstrated strong all-round performance of itel - securing impressive scores of 0.65 in feature phones and 0.86 in



smartphones - highest in the segment. Additionally, 85% of consumers feel they get great value for money, 81% associate itel with strength and durability, 79% appreciate its design, and 74% consider it a trustworthy and reliable brand. At the heart of the itel A100 Pro lies a stunning 6.6-inch 90Hz HD+ display, complemented by immersive DTS-powered sound technology - engineered to captivate the senses with

vibrant colours, crisp clarity, and ultra-smooth visuals. The addition of an intuitive Dynamic Bar keeps users effortlessly connected with battery status, calls, notifications, and more without interruption. Photography enthusiasts will love the 8MP rear camera, enhanced with advanced image Processing resulting in vivid and vibrant images. The A100 Pro also features an IR blaster, making it easy to control TVs, air conditioners, and other electronic appliances remotely. Powered by an octa-core Unisoc T7100 Processor and Android 15 Go - the A100 Pro ensures seamless multi-tasking, smooth gaming, and effortless video calls. For security and ease of access, the A100 Pro comes equipped with face unlock and a side-mounted fingerprint sensor, offering both Protection and convenience. Packed with a large 5000 mAh battery and 10W charger, the device ensures all-day performance. This smartphone is available in iconic colours of

Comet Orange, Cloud White and Black.

About itel
Established over 16 years, itel is a reliable smart life brand for everyone. Adopting "Enjoy Better Life" as its brand philosophy, itel's mission is to Provide budget-friendly consumer electronic Products to everyone. It democratizes technology by giving entry to technology and connectedness to consumers without prior access to it. After more than 16 years of development, itel has expanded its presence in more than 80 emerging markets globally. itel has a Product portfolio of smartphones, TV, accessories, electronics, speakers, home appliances and laptop Products and in 2021, it ranked No.1 Global Smartphone brand under \$75 and No.1 feature phone brand. **Website: www.itel-india.com | Facebook: itelmobilityindia | Instagram: itel_india | Twitter: itel_india**

FEG Inaugurates New Global Capability Centre in Hyderabad

Fortuna Entertainment Group (FEG) has inaugurated a new Global Capability Centre (GCC) in Hyderabad, strengthening its long-term commitment to India and expanding its global technology operations. Located at My Home Twitza in HITEC City, the new 120-seater facility has become FEG's third-largest technology hub worldwide after Prague in the Czech Republic and Split in Croatia.

The Hyderabad GCC will support FEG's global operations in data engineering, analytics, business intelligence (BI), product development, IT services, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), automation, and customer experience optimization. The centre is expected to play a major role in accelerating technology-driven innovation and supporting the company's next phase of international growth. The inauguration ceremony was attended by FEG's senior leadership team, including Group CEO Dieter John, Group CTO Sotiris Haritos, and Iain Child, Managing Partner at Penta Investments,

the owner of FEG. Senior executives travelled to India for the launch, underlining the strategic importance of the Hyderabad facility for the company's future plans. As part of its long-term strategy, FEG has committed to investing C12 million in India over the next five years. The investment reflects the company's strong confidence in India's technology ecosystem, skilled workforce, and growing reputation as a global innovation hub. According to the company, Hyderabad was selected due to its strong ecosystem in AI, engineering, analytics, and data science. FEG believes the city offers the right combination of skilled talent, technology infrastructure, and business environment needed to build future-ready digital capabilities at a global scale. The Hyderabad centre will serve as a strategic technology and innovation hub for FEG's omnichannel betting and gaming operations across several European markets. The GCC will focus on advanced analytics, intelligent automation, predictive technologies, software engineering, IT monitoring, and real-time business intelligence. The expansion is aligned



with FEG's broader "FEG 2.0" strategy and its "Fortuna Fit for Future" (F4) transformation programme. The initiative is aimed at building scalable, technology-driven, and data-led business capabilities to support long-term growth and competitiveness in international markets. FEG plans to integrate AI deeply into its business operations through the Hyderabad GCC. The centre will help the company develop predictive analytics solutions, intelligent automation systems, smarter decision-making tools, and improved digital experiences for customers across global operations. Speaking at the inauguration, Group CEO Dieter John said India plays a central role in FEG's international expansion strategy. He stated that Hyderabad has evolved into a strategic capability hub for the company because of its strong engineering talent and expertise in AI, analytics, and digital technologies. Group CTO Sotiris Haritos highlighted the growing importance of the India centre in developing future-focused technology platforms. He said the Hyderabad GCC would contribute directly to product innovation, automation, and business intelligence that will shape FEG's technology evolution globally. Avinash Gupta, Managing Director of FEG India Solutions, said the India operations have transformed significantly over the years. What began as a support function has now developed into a high-impact

technology centre handling multiple capabilities such as BI, AI, software testing, automation, IT monitoring, and gaming operations. He added that the Hyderabad GCC is now deeply integrated into FEG's global strategy and will continue to drive innovation, agility, and long-term business value for the organisation. Iain Child, Managing Partner at Penta Investments, also praised India's strong technology ecosystem and talent pool. He noted that India offers the right mix of innovation, scalability, and highly skilled professionals, making it an ideal destination for long-term strategic investments. FEG India has been operating as the technology and innovation hub of Fortuna Entertainment Group since 2020. The centre focuses on delivering advanced solutions in artificial intelligence, business intelligence, analytics, and engineering to support FEG's global business operations. Fortuna Entertainment Group is one of the leading omnichannel betting and gaming operators in Central and Eastern Europe, with operations across several regulated markets and over 25 years of industry experience.

Comprehensive Neuro Care and DBS Offering Hope for Advanced Parkinson's Patients

SECUNDERABAD, MAY 21, 2026:

Parkinson's Disease, a progressive neurological disorder that commonly affects the elderly population, is increasingly becoming a major health concern in India due to rising life expectancy and ageing-related conditions. Experts estimate that nearly 1% of individuals above the age of 60 are affected by Parkinson's Disease, with symptoms gradually impacting mobility, independence, and overall quality of life. Addressing the media, the Neuro Sciences team at Medicover Hospitals stated that Parkinson's Disease occurs due to the gradual degeneration of dopamine-producing neurons in the brain. Dopamine plays a crucial role in controlling smooth body movements and coordination. Patients suffering from Parkinson's Disease commonly experience tremors of the hands at rest, stiffness of limbs, slowness of movement, imbalance while walking, frequent falls, sleep disturbances, and in some advanced cases, memory impairment and cognitive decline. The specialists explained that Parkinson's Disease progresses through different stages. In the early phase, patients may experience mild unilateral tremors, slowing of daily activities, and difficulty initiating move-



ments. As the disease advances, rigidity, imbalance, and reduced movement become more prominent, significantly affecting day-to-day functioning. In advanced stages, patients may become severely dependent on caregivers due to stiffness, impaired mobility, and cognitive decline. The Neuro team highlighted that while medications remain the primary treatment in the initial stages by helping improve dopamine levels in the brain, advanced Parkinson's Disease may require additional interventions for better symptom control. One such well-established treatment modality is Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS), which is increasingly being used globally in carefully selected patients to improve symptom management and quality of life. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Srinivas Dussa said, "Deep Brain Stimulation is not a cure for Parkinson's Disease, but it can significantly help selected patients by reducing tremors, rigidity, and movement

fluctuations. The procedure can improve mobility, enhance functional independence, and help patients maintain a better quality of life." The doctors shared the case of Mr. Rakesh, a 60-year-old patient diagnosed with advanced Parkinson's Disease, who recently underwent DBS surgery and has shown encouraging improvement in movement control and overall stability following the procedure. The multidisciplinary Neuro Sciences team involved in the patient's care included Dr. Srinivas Dussa, Dr. Ramesh Shighakolli, Dr. Rohit Ramesh, Dr. Vikas Agarwal, and Dr. Sudheer, along with neuro-anesthesia, rehabilitation, physiotherapy, critical care, and nursing teams. The team emphasized that successful Parkinson's management requires a strong multidisciplinary approach involving neurologists, neurosurgeons, rehabilitation specialists, physiotherapists, and caregivers working together to provide long-term comprehensive care.



Gond Katira This Summer?

This Is The Right Time To Consume It, As Per A Nutritionist

As temperatures rise, gond katira has once again become a summer favourite in many Indian households. From cooling drinks to traditional desserts, this natural gum is of-

ten consumed to beat the heat and stay hydrated. But while social media is filled with recipes and wellness claims, experts say timing and quantity matter just as much as

the ingredient itself. So, when is the best time to consume gond katira? Nutritionist Leena Mahajan shared important insights on when and who should consume it carefully.

What Is The Best Time To Have Gond Katira?

According to Leena Mahajan, gond katira is best consumed in the morning on an empty stomach or during mid-morning hours, along with enough fluids. Gond katira is traditionally consumed earlier in the day during summer because it is believed to have cooling properties and may feel heavy if consumed too late or in excess. This could be uncomfortable for people who have a sensitive digestive system. Mahajan explains that gond katira forms a thick gel-like texture in the stomach. While this is what gives it its cooling effect, it may also slow digestion in some people.

How To Consume Gond Katira Correctly

- Soak 1-2 teaspoons overnight
- Consume 1-2 tablespoons of the gel
- Always take it with enough fluids
- She also cautions against consuming it dry.

Who Should Be Careful While Having Gond Katira?

According to Mahajan, gond katira may not suit everyone

equally, especially people with sensitive digestion or certain health concerns.

- Experience bloating, IBS or frequent gas
- Have low blood pressure
- Follow a high-fibre diet already
- Have slow digestion or heaviness after meals
- Drink very little water during the day
- Are recovering from illness or have low appetite

When Should You Avoid It?

- Right before a workout
- Immediately after a heavy meal
- Alongside medicines

Gond katira can be a refreshing addition to a summer diet when consumed mindfully. But as Leena Mahajan points out, it is not a one-size-fits-all ingredient. Your digestion, hydration levels and timing play an important role in deciding whether it works well for your body.



What is intuitive eating?

The 10 principles explained

Diet trends come and go but 'intuitive eating' (seen as the anti-diet) has stuck around for a reason. Founded in 1995 by dietitians Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch, it's often misunderstood as just eating based on hunger and fullness cues. But there's more to it than that. While most restrictive fad diets don't work for the majority of people long term, external, this approach encourages a move away from rules and restrictions. Instead, it prompts a way of eating, moving and looking after yourself that listens to your body's natural signals. This can be a difficult shift, especially if you've spent years following strict diets or using apps to track what you eat. But there's a growing body of research behind it.

What is intuitive eating?

Intuitive eating focuses on behaviours that are good for overall physical and mental health, rather than weight loss. There are no 'good' or 'bad' foods - it's about making peace with all types of food. It aims to help you tune into your body's signals around what and how much to eat. By learning to listen to cues, we can build a sustainable way of eating that works without tracking or restriction.

The 10 principles of intuitive eating
1. Reject the diet mentality
We live in a yo-yo dieting culture that tells us thin is best and encourages quick results. The

truth is, weight alone doesn't equal health.
2. Honour your hunger
Choose to eat when hunger signals arise, regardless of the time of day. This can be hard, as diets may have trained you to restrict and ignore these feelings in the past.
3. Make peace with food
In intuitive eating, all foods (including so-called 'treats') are back on the table to be enjoyed without shame, in the context of a nutritious, balanced diet.
4. Challenge the food police
Rules from diet culture and our upbringing can create guilt around food. Identify, question and reframe them in a neutral or more positive way.

5. Respect your fullness
Just as you should eat when you feel hungry, it's important to listen to your body's fullness signals. That means slowing down your eating and stopping when you're comfortably full.
6. Discover the satisfaction factor
Choosing foods you truly enjoy brings more satisfaction. Create a pleasant environment when you eat and take time to savour the flavours and textures.
7. Honour your feelings without using food
Food is not always about nutrition. We can use it as a way to soothe ourselves and sometimes that's fine. But it's also important to recognise that food alone can't solve emotion-

al issues. It's healthy to balance with alternative coping strategies.
8. Respect your body
Acceptance that all bodies are different is key. The focus is on treating your body with respect and focusing on the positives it brings you.
9. Mindful movement (not punishment)
In intuitive eating the focus is on the joy of movement, instead of exercise for weight loss.
10. Honour your health with gentle nutrition
While getting a wide range of nutrients is important, not every meal needs perfect balance. Including food for pleasure and satisfaction leads to a lifelong enjoyable way of eating that's also good for your health.

Struggling to sleep?

The foods and drinks that could help - and what to avoid



The best foods to eat before bed

Tryptophan is an essential amino acid that you can only get from food. It's thought to influence sleep, as it plays a role in producing serotonin and melatonin (chemicals that help regulate sleep). Happily, it's found in everyday ingredients like poultry and eggs. Some research suggests combining tryptophan-rich foods with carbohydrates may help the body absorb it more effectively, external, though more studies are needed. Milk and yoghurt both contain modest amounts of tryptophan, so while we might think to combine it with cereal or oats for breakfast - the combination of protein and carbs might actually help you to sleep. Bananas and peanut butter also contain tryptophan (although in smaller amounts). So if you fancy a sleepy snack, a small slice of wholegrain toast topped with either (or both) could be beneficial. Tryptophan aside, there's some evidence, external that eating two kiwis an hour before going to bed could improve sleep. They're high in serotonin, vitamin C, polyphenols, folate and B vitamins and when combined, this is reported to have a sleep-improving effect.

The best drinks for sleep

It's worth noting the studies have been relatively small though, and that dietary serotonin doesn't directly affect levels in the brain.

Having a glass of warm milk before bed might be a cliché, but milk actually contains a small amount of melatonin, a hormone that helps you feel an urge to fall asleep. That said, the jury's out, external on whether it can actually impact our body's melatonin levels. So-called 'sleepy teas' often contain chamomile, valerian and passionflower, which some people report help them to fall asleep. Chamomile may help increase glycine, external (a nerve relaxant) in the body and some studies have shown it can improve sleep, external. Evidence on valerian is mixed, with some studies showing benefits, external and others finding little effect, external. Passionflower, external may help ease stress and anxiety, which could lead to a better night's rest. There have been numerous positive studies, external linking tart cherry juice to improved sleep, because the drink comes with tryptophan, melatonin and anthocyanins (which have antioxidant qualities). Everyone responds differently to all these ingredients though, and studies on them have been small or focused on supplements as opposed to drinks. So while a carefully chosen pre-bed refreshment might be worth a try, don't be surprised if it has little impact. On the subject of drinks, there is one certainty: you're definitely not going to sleep well if you keep needing to get up for the loo, or are dehydrated and thirsty. So make sure you're drinking enough water during the day, and taper off before bedtime.

What you should avoid before bed

It's hardly surprising to see caffeine on the list of drinks to steer clear of. Too much can interfere with falling asleep, how long you sleep for and the quality of your sleep. A review of recent research, external recommended those wanting a good night's sleep should stop drinking coffee around nine hours before bedtime. Alcohol might help you fall asleep, but it also reduces time in REM sleep (a sleep stage that's important for mood, memory and learning), can cause us to wake during the night and snore.

The odd nightcap won't do you much harm, but if it becomes a habit it could lead to insomnia. Sugar is also on the naughty step when it comes to sleep, with a study, external linking it to poor sleep quality. If you're consuming a lot of sweet treats and sugary drinks close to bedtime, you're likely to get a sharp energy boost, which isn't ideal. Spicy food is believed to be thermogenic, external (meaning it raises your body temperature, external) and may give you indigestion - both of which are bad news for sleep. If you're looking to cool down, a warm bath.

For something that's crucial to our physical and mental function, sleep can be difficult to get. The harder you try, the more elusive it is. If you feel like you're only getting a good night's sleep half the time, congratulations, you're in good company. A 2025 study found that the average adult gets about three decent nights of rest a week. But have we got all our tactics right? There's a solid chance that you could support

restful nights with what you eat and drink. Quick sleep tips: what to try
Foods that combine carbs, protein and tryptophan
Kiwis, chamomile tea and tart cherry juice
Avoid caffeine, alcohol, sugar and heavy/spicy meals
Stop eating 2-3 hours before bed
Limit caffeine 6-9 hours before bed

Can diet fix acne?

What dermatologists really want you to know

Scroll through social media and you'll find endless advice and anecdotes about how diet can fix your skin. But is it really that simple? "This is an issue I encounter daily in my clinics," says Dr Anjali Mahto, external, a consultant dermatologist and author of *The Skincare Bible*, who sees many people adjust their diets to improve skin conditions like acne. "Misinformation is rife, conflicts of interest are not declared and the personal care market is there to sell [products]. Many people are doing a real disservice to their skin by taking advice from celebrity bloggers, 'clean' eaters and the booming industry of 'wellness'," says Mahto. For most people, diet has only a small impact on acne, despite social media claims.

lead to many people cutting out foods from their diet, or developing disordered eating patterns, for fear of aggravating their skin disease". Mahto says there aren't really 'good' or 'bad' foods. Instead, "diet is more about eating in a sustained, healthy manner across the course of your lifetime. Moderation is key."

Do nutrients in food or supplements help reduce acne?

Probiotics, external, antioxidants, omega-3 fatty acids, zinc and vitamins A and E have been linked to improvements in acne-prone or spotty skin. "The data for all these is limited," explains Mahto. "It's difficult to say if supplementation of any of the above will have a true benefit for acne." The doses of the supplements suggested may be difficult to tolerate - zinc sulphate can cause gastrointestinal side-effects (if consumed in excess). "A vitamin A derivative, isotretinoin... is already used in prescription acne treatment. Exercise caution with over-the-counter supplements. The evidence is limited, and they may lead to unnecessary expense and potential side-effects." Because there are reported health risks associated with taking too much of certain nutrients - such as vitamin A, external - Mahto says it's important to speak to a healthcare professional before adding supplements to your diet. "This is particularly important if you are planning a pregnancy, are pregnant, breastfeeding or taking other prescribed medications."

Can dairy make acne worse?

Mahto explains: "For a small, select group of individuals, removing dairy can be of benefit for acne. Clinical studies suggest, external low-fat dairy seems to be more of a problem than full-fat, but the reasons are unclear. I have also had a small number of people who have cut out whey-based protein supplements and their acne has improved. "So dairy may have a role to play in this small, select group. The difficulty we have is identifying who they are and recognising that 'dairy' is a large food group - milk may not have the same effect as yoghurt or cheese, for example."

Does sugar or greasy food cause acne?

"There's a common misconception that greasy foods can be the cause or trigger for acne. That said, foods with a high glycaemic index, or diets consistently high in refined sugar, may cause acne, according to emerging scientific evidence, external. "These foods can still be part of a well-rounded, healthy diet, but should be consumed in moderation."

Are there 'bad foods' that cause acne?

"Acne is often down to hormones and genetics - factors largely outside of our control. "Telling someone they are eating 'bad food', which is causing their acne, shifts the blame onto the individual and creates a sense of shame around their dietary choices. Often food consumption has little to do with acne." "This can

What should you do if you're worried about acne?

"Nobody should have to feel miserable or self-conscious because of their acne. Being concerned about your skin is not vanity - and acne is not a beauty or cosmetic problem - it's a medical one with medical treatments. "Don't suffer in silence and don't get conned into spending a fortune on beauty products or supplements. "Seek professional help from your GP or a consultant dermatologist who will diagnose the type and severity of acne you have and tailor a treatment plan for you. "Acne is related to anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and poor body image, and in an ideal scenario we would like to treat you before you develop physical or mental scarring because of it." While what you eat can certainly impact all areas of your health, it's unlikely to fix acne on its own for most people.

CAN DIET FIX ACNE? THE FACTS, NOT THE HYPE

Social media is full of claims about 'bad foods' causing acne and miracle diets that promise clear skin. But what does the science say?

66 Misinformation is rife, conflicts of interest are not declared and the personal care market is there to sell [products]. Many people are doing a real disservice to their skin by taking advice from celebrity bloggers, 'clean' eaters and the booming industry of 'wellness'.

Dr Anjali Mahto
Consultant Dermatologist and author of *The Skincare Bible*

For most people, diet has only a small impact on acne, despite social media claims.

CAN DAIRY MAKE ACNE WORSE?

- For a small, select group of individuals, removing dairy can be of benefit for acne.
- Clinical studies suggest low-fat dairy seems to be more of a problem than full-fat, but the reasons are unclear.
- Some people who cut out whey-based protein supplements have seen improvement.
- Dairy is a large food group - milk may not have the same effect as yoghurt or cheese, for example.

KEY TAKEAWAY
Dairy may affect a small group of people, but it's not the same for everyone.

DOES SUGAR OR GREASY FOOD CAUSE ACNE?

- Greasy foods are not a direct cause or trigger for acne.
- Emerging scientific evidence suggests diets high in high glycaemic index foods or refined sugar may contribute to acne.
- These foods can be part of a healthy diet, but moderation is key.

KEY TAKEAWAY
Focus on balance and moderation, not elimination.

ARE THERE 'BAD FOODS' THAT CAUSE ACNE?

- Acne is often down to hormones and genetics - factors largely outside of our control.
- Telling someone they are eating 'bad food' shifts blame and creates shame.
- Food has little to do with acne for most people.
- Restrictive diets can lead to disordered eating and worsen mental health.

KEY TAKEAWAY
There aren't really 'good' or 'bad' foods. Aim for a sustained, healthy diet over your lifetime. Moderation is key.

DO NUTRIENTS OR SUPPLEMENTS HELP REDUCE ACNE?

Some reviews have been linked to improvements in acne-prone skin, but the evidence is limited.

- It's difficult to say if supplementation will have a true benefit.
- High doses may cause side-effects (e.g. zinc sulphate can cause gastrointestinal issues).
- A vitamin A derivative, isotretinoin, is already used in prescription acne treatment.
- Exercise caution with over-the-counter supplements - they may be costly and cause side-effects.

Probiotics, Antioxidants, Omega-3 fatty acids, Zinc, Vitamin A & E

SHORT NEWS

IPL 2026
'Rajat Patidar fit to lead RCB for clash against SRH'



HYDERABAD: Defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru Director of Cricket Mo Bobat confirmed skipper Rajat Patidar's availability for Friday's league-stage clash against Sunrisers Hyderabad, after he missed the clash against Punjab Kings in Dharamshala due to being hit on the head while facing Kolkata Knight Riders in Raipur. "Rajat's good to go. We were cautious and didn't take any risks with him. We thought we'd give him a little bit longer to recover and rest, but he's here, he's practising, and he's good to go," Bobat said in the pre-match press conference on the eve of the fixture. Bobat reserved special praise for senior pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar, who currently holds the purple cap via 24 wickets in 13 innings. "Bhuvi has been brilliant. His outcomes have been excellent."

CRICKET
'Every cricketer faces tough times Pant will return stronger'



GHAZIABAD (UP): Former India wicketkeeper and chief selector Kiran More has backed wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant to overcome his lean run in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, insisting that his resilience and courage will ensure he will make a strong comeback from a phase that happens to every cricketer. More's comments come after Pant's horrid time continued with him being replaced by KL Rahul as India's vice-captain in Tests, while losing the second keeper slot to Ishan Kishan in the ODIs for the games against Afghanistan in June. So far, Pant has made just 286 runs in 13 matches in IPL 2026, where under his leadership, Lucknow Super Giants are at the bottom spot on the points table.

CSK ride on Samson's unbeaten 87, bowlers' impressive show, beat DC by eight wickets

AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Titans' bankable top order laid the groundwork for a dominating 89-run win over Chennai Super Kings here on Thursday, taking them closer to a top-two qualification for the Indian Premier League play-offs. Shubman Gill (64 off 37) and Sai Sudharsan (84 off 53) added to their remarkable consistency as an opening pair with a record seventh century partnership, fuelling Gujarat Titans to 229 for four on a true batting surface. Jos Buttler (57 not out off 27) blasted a barrage of sixes and fours in the second half of the innings to prop up the total.

CSK, who had a slim chance of making the play-offs going into this must-win game, lost the match in the powerplay when they lost four wickets for 51 runs. The visitors were all out for 140 in 13.4 overs after a six filled cameo from Shivam Dube (47 off 17). For the third straight season, the five-time champions failed to make the play-offs. Mohammed Siraj took three wickets in the first six overs, including that of Sanju Samson, who edged the very first delivery of the CSK innings. Samson fished at a wide delivery and got a faint tinkle on way to Buttler.



Titans' bowling unit has arguably been the best in the tournament and they reinforced with a stellar show in the first six overs. Complementing Siraj, Kagiso Rabada had Matthew Short at mid on off a ball that seamed back in slightly and the Australia could not connect properly. Titans capped their successful stage campaign with nine wins in 14 matches, totalling 18 points. Sunrisers Hyderabad too can reach 18 points if they win against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, who are already on 18 points, tomorrow.

The top two sides out of four play-off teams get two shots at reaching the final scheduled in Ahmedabad on May 31. Earlier, Gill displayed sublime touch from ball one, toying with the left arm pacer Spencer Johnson in the powerplay. Gill got his fifty off 23 balls while Sudharsan reached the milestone off 35 balls, his fifth consecutive half-century. Gill scored the bulk of the runs in their 125-run stand off 74 balls. The range of boundaries Gill picked up off a wayward Johnson was a masterclass in batting. He mixed minimum muscle with trademark elegance to get the desired results. His fours off Johnson included a cut off the Australian's very first ball before the Indian star used his crease against the left-arm pacer to collect boundaries at will. The straight drive in the same over was the most majestic of them all. When Noor Ahmad was brought into the attack post powerplay that yielded 62 runs, Gill did not allow

him to settle, slog sweeping him for couple of sixes. The 100-run partnership for the seventh time was brought up soon after, surpassing the pair of David Warner and Shikhar Dhawan, and Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma, who have forged six century stand each in the IPL. Both the openers were hardly troubled as Titans cruised to 111 for no loss in 10 overs. After Gill's departure, Sudharsan and Buttler maintained the same tempo to take Titans well past 200. Sudharsan played with minimum risk as he often does. In the penultimate over, he picked a wide low full toss off Anshul Kamboj over point for a spectacular six. Buttler too was in full flow and collected as many as four sixes, two coming off Noor. **Not many people buy the fact that we are a young team in transition, says Gaikwad** Chennai Super Kings (CSK) skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad admitted the franchise is in a phase of transition with several inexperienced players, even as he expressed pride in the unit's effort despite missing out on the playoffs in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 in Ahmedabad on Thursday. CSK's chances of entering the playoffs ended with them suffering their heaviest defeat in the IPL — by 89 runs — against Gujarat Titans at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Thursday. "Not many people buy the fact that we are a young team in transition, with a lot of inexperienced players. More than 8-10 players have played less than 20 games; they've gotten exposure, and we've found out what areas we're lacking. We still have six away wins, and I'm proud of the unit. "We missed out on chasing in Hyderabad and couldn't restrict them in Chennai. Not able to do that, but still proud. Moving on from Rahane, Rayudu, etc., the experience we had is tough... Karthik, Urvil, and Brevris, who missed out initially, are there. Karthik has potential and has areas to improve. Urvil's playing a full season for the first time, that comes with expectations," said Gaikwad at the conclusion of the game. Reflecting on the season, Gaikwad said injuries to Nathan Ellis, Khaleel Ahmed, Ayush Mhatre, Ramakrishna Ghosh, and Jamie Overton unsettled the side at various stages, while admitting the bowlers weren't great in Ahmedabad. "We wanted to chase whatever the total is asap. When you're chasing 230, it's not easy against that bowling attack. I thought, why don't we give it a shot and express ourselves, credit to them. The wicket was spongy to start, and they started well. Our bowling wasn't good in the Power-play."

SM Krishna Memorial Open: Mukund loses as Indian challenge ends in singles



BENGALURU

The Indian challenge in the men's singles section of the SM Krishna Memorial Open Tennis Championship came to an end, with Mukund Sasikumar going down to second seed Alastair Gray of Great Britain in a quarterfinal battle that stretched two hours and 40 minutes at the SM Krishna Stadium in Bengaluru on Thursday. Mukund Sasikumar, the 29-year-old from Chennai who is ranked 536 in the world, produced a stirring fight and pushed the higher-ranked Gray (World No. 287) to the brink before eventually falling 2-6, 7-5, 7-6(3) in the most gripping match of the tournament.

marked by resilience and fearless shot-making, as he fired 14 aces—five more than Gray—and committed fewer double faults despite facing sustained pressure. The Indian repeatedly clawed his way back into the contest and was within touching distance of a semifinal berth. Gray raced ahead early, capitalising on three breaks of serve in the opening set to pocket it 6-2 despite Mukund breaking in the second game. The Briton appeared in control, using his superior ranking and consistency to dictate proceedings. However, Mukund raised his level dramatically in the second set. After earning a break in the fourth game, the Indian looked poised to force a decider before Gray broke back in the ninth. With the set hanging in balance at 5-5, Mukund held firm and then struck decisively in the 12th game, breaking Gray to claim the set 7-5 and ignite hopes among the home crowd. The deciding set turned into a rollercoaster. Gray secured a crucial break in the ninth game and appeared set to close out the contest. But Mukund showcased a remarkable fighting spirit, saving a match point before breaking back in the 10th game. Riding the momentum, the Indian then held serve at love in the 11th to push the pressure back on Gray. With neither player giving an inch, the contest headed into a tiebreak. The Briton seized control immediately, opening with an early mini-break and maintaining his advantage to seal the match and deny Mukund what would have been one of the memorable semifinal appearances of his career.

TBL ready to pick young talented players from all over the Telangana



Concentrated more on grassroot and Rural area players.

Hyderabad hurricanes team is owned by young businessman Mulla Vikram.

and girls. Association expecting more participation from rural areas. After a Week long trails, from each category 100 players has been shortlisted and totally 400 players were facilitated by association.

for achieving franchise sales of this range for first youth basketball league. Player auction will be held today said telangana basketball association general secretary prudhivishwar reddy. Mr Reddy who has represented India, internationally and he also played in USA, Thailand and Spain.

and shaping them has future for national and international player's. Apart from this, Mulla Vikram Goud a young businessman from Hyderabad, He is owning hyderabad hurricanes team for identifying young talent from all over hyderabad. As a sportsman he encourages talented and young players. He is not stucked for only one sport, past he has already done with a huge mallyayudha competition with a prize money of 5 lakh rupees for winner and encourages young talented players and takes responsibility of their education also. Education and sports both must not be neglected at any cost, says Mulla Vikram.

HYDERABAD

Telangana basket ball association took an initiative to identify young talent from the grassroot level, for this the franchise was valued at 1.48 crore rupees. The Telangana professional basketball league has already done with 3000 registrations across Telangana under under-15 and 18 for both boys

French Open 2026: Sinner, Djokovic land in opposite halves of men's singles draw

PARIS

Italy's Jannik Sinner and Novak Djokovic, the player who has won the most Grand Slam titles in the history of the sport, have landed on opposite sides of the French Open men's singles draw, following the official ceremony at Stade Roland Garros in Paris on Thursday. The No. 1 player in the ATP Rankings, Sinner, arrives at the clay-court major carrying a 29-match winning streak and will open his campaign against French wild card Clement Tabur. The 24-year-old Sinner is aiming to become just the seventh man in the Open Era to complete the Career Grand Slam with a title run at Roland Garros. Djokovic, a three-time champion at Roland Garros, begins his latest bid for a 25th major trophy against Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard and could face NextGen ATP star Joao Fonseca in the third round. The Serbian is in the same half of the draw as second seed and 2024 finalist Alexander Zverev, who opens against Frenchman Benjamin Bonzi. Lying in Zverev's



quarter is home favourite Arthur Fils, who begins his campaign against Stan Wawrinka. The 41-year-old Swiss, who triumphed at Roland Garros in 2015, is competing in his final season on the ATP Tour. Gael Monfils, who is also competing in his final season on Tour, will meet Hugo Gaston in his final appearance at Roland Garros. #NextGenATP talents Rafael Jodar, Martin Landaluce, and Moise Kouame have also learned their draw fate. Jodar, who is 15-3 on clay this year, according to the Infosys ATP Win/Loss Index, begins against Aleksandar Kovacevic on his debut and could meet seventh seed Taylor Fritz in the third round.

East Bengal win maiden title with 2-1 win over Inter Kashi

KOLKATA

Decades of pain and disappointment dissolved in tears of joy as East Bengal finally reclaimed their place at the summit of Indian football, winning their maiden title in the Indian Super League on Thursday, 22 years after their last national league triumph. The Red-and-Gold Brigade were crowned champions of India on a historic Thursday night by defeating Inter Kashi 2-1 in a nerve-shredding ISL 2025-26 finale at the Kishore Bharati Krirangan in Kolkata on Thursday. When the final whistle blew, the stadium erupted into scenes of pure emotion. Players collapsed to the ground, fans embraced in disbelief, and chants of "East Bengal, East Bengal" thundered around the packed arena. Mohammed Rashid emerged as the unlikely hero with the decisive winner in the 72nd minute after league top scorer Yousef Ezzejjari had brought East Bengal level early in the second half, cancelling out Alfred Planas' 14th-minute strike for Inter Kashi with a 50th-minute goal of his own. The victory ensured East Bengal finished at the top of the ISL table with 26 points from 13 matches. Mohun Bagan Super Giant also won



their final match against Sporting Club Delhi by the same 2-1 scoreline and finished level on points, but East Bengal's superior goal difference of five finally ended the club's agonising wait for a national league title. Yet the night began with tension and anxiety gripping the home supporters. The enormity of the occasion seemed to weigh heavily on East Bengal as Inter Kashi stunned the crowd with an early goal. Oscar Bruzon's men started brightly enough, with Ezzejjari and Miguel Figueira testing Inter Kashi from distance in the opening exchanges. Despite the early pressure, Inter Kashi remained composed and

organised before striking against the run of play in the 14th minute. David Munoz floated a long ball towards the East Bengal penalty area, and Alfred Planas timed his run perfectly to latch onto it. Without hesitation, the Spaniard struck a magnificent first-time volley that flew beyond Prabh Sukhan Gill and into the net, silencing the stadium. For a few moments, fear crept into the stands. The dream that had felt so close suddenly looked fragile again. East Bengal, though, almost found an immediate response eight minutes later. Bipin Singh delivered a teasing cross across the face of the goal, and Ezzejjari only needed the

slightest touch from close range. Somehow, the forward managed to send the ball soaring over the crossbar, leaving supporters clutching their heads in disbelief. Inter Kashi, sensing vulnerability, continued to threaten. Planas tormented the East Bengal defence and nearly doubled the lead in the 24th minute after gliding past Anwar Ali before unleashing a powerful effort that Gill tipped behind. Inter Kashi could have gone further ahead in the 35th minute when Gill spilt a long-range effort from Planas. Fortunately for East Bengal, the rebound was dragged into the side netting. Minutes later, Tomba Singh forced another save from Gill as nervousness spread around the stadium. East Bengal desperately pushed forward before halftime, but their attacks lacked the final cutting edge. Then came the turning point. East Bengal emerged after the break with renewed purpose and intensity. In the 50th minute, Anwar Ali produced a stunning defence-splitting pass from deep inside his own half to release Ezzejjari. The Moroccan outpaced his marker Munoz, reached the ball ahead of the goalkeeper Shubham Dhas, and showed immense composure to nutmeg the advancing keeper before calmly rolling the ball into the empty net.

Jamshedpur and Odisha share spoils in their final game of the season

JAMSHEDPUR

Jamshedpur FC and Odisha FC played out a fiercely contested goalless draw in their final Indian Super League 2025-26 encounter at the JRD Tata Sports Complex in Jamshedpur on Thursday. With this season-ending draw, Jamshedpur FC finished their campaign in sixth place with 22 points, while Odisha FC concluded their season at the bottom half of the table in 12th position with 11 points. Despite numerous attacking opportunities and a persistent offensive display from the hosts, neither side could find the back of the net as the respective defences held firm. It was only because of the quality goalkeeping of 24-year-old Manas Dubey that the scoreline remained 0-0 until the regulation 90 minutes, and he was deservedly adjudged the Player of the Match for producing a couple of brilliant saves. Jamshedpur FC looked like scoring from the moment both teams arrived on the ground, making it one-way traffic as the Red Miners dominated the game completely at The Furnace.

ANASWARA RAJAN COMES ON BOARD MEGA 158

The makers of director Bobby Kolli's upcoming action entertainer, tentatively being referred to as #Mega158 and featuring Megastar Chiranjeevi in the lead, on Thursday announced that actress Anaswara Rajan had come on board the unit of the film. The announcement was made even as the film went on floors with a grand pooja ceremony that was graced by a number of dignitaries including Megastar Chiranjeevi's brothers -- Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan and MLC Naga Babu. The first clap for the film was given by actor and Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan.

Taking to their X timeline, KVN Productions, the firm producing the film, wrote, "A new wave of charm joins the MEGA storm. Welcoming the lovely #AnaswaraRajan to the world of #Mega158. #KVN-TeluguDebut - #ChiruBobby2 Launched Grandly. A @dirbobby Film. Megastar @KChiruTweets #VenkatKNarayana @MusicThaman @vijaykartikdop @AntonyL-Ruben @artkolla @KvnProductions."

The makers have already announced that ace music director Thaman will be



scoring music for this film and that popular cinematographer Vijay Karthik Kannan, known for his impressive work in films like 'Jailer', 'Daaku Maharaj', and the upcoming 'Jailer 2', will be cinematographer. Art direction for the film is to be handled by Kolla Avinash and editing will be by Antony Ruben.

The film has been in the news ever since

its... Charged up and excited for another memorable journey with my dear @dirbobby for #Mega158. Opening Ceremony on May 21st." For the unaware, Megastar Chiranjeevi is joining forces once again with successful filmmaker Bobby Kolli for a high-voltage entertainer backed by the prestigious KVN Productions and produced by Venkat K Narayana.

The footage Chiranjeevi shared showed him pushing boundaries with relentless intensity, a testament to the transformative effort he's investing to achieve a powerful new look for the role.

The structured training regimen emphasizes explosive power, functional strength, and exceptional stamina, hinting at the kind of high-octane action the star will be delivering on screen.

The poster released by the makers to announce the project had an axe splitting a wall open, with traces of blood seen in the cracks on the wall. The poster had the tagline "The blade that set the bloody benchmark." This is the second time that director Bobby is working with Megastar Chiranjeevi. The two had earlier worked together on action entertainer 'Waltair Veerayya'.

Glam Mode On for Pragya

Pragya Jaiswal grabbed attention with her stunning appearance in a stylish black outfit that perfectly blended glamour and elegance. The actress confidently carried the bold look, with her thigh slit and midriff show adding extra charm to the latest photoshoot. Fans on social media are praising her fashion sense and screen presence. The actress has been maintaining a strong buzz with her glamorous appearances and pub-

lic outings. Her confident style statements continue to make headlines, especially among Telugu cinema audiences who admire her graceful yet bold personality. On the work front, Pragya Jaiswal was last seen in Daaku Maharaj and Akhanda alongside Nandamuri Balakrishna. Both films helped strengthen her popularity in Telugu cinema, and fans are now eagerly waiting for announcements about her upcoming projects.

Despite Heatwave, Prabhas Continues Nonstop Shooting



Prabhas is known for taking frequent trips to Europe whenever he gets a break from work. There has long been talk in industry circles that the actor prefers spending peak summer in Italy, where he reportedly rented a luxurious resort property years ago. However, this year, Prabhas has chosen work over leisure. The actor has been simultaneously juggling the shoots of Sandeep Reddy Vanga's "Spirit" and Hanu Raghavapudi's "Fauji" without taking extended breaks. At present, Prabhas is busy filming a crucial schedule for "Spirit" in Hyderabad. The shoot reportedly involves important police station sequences featuring Vivek Oberoi alongside Prabhas. Despite the intense heatwave conditions across Hyderabad and Telangana, the actor has continued shooting without slowing down. Industry sources say Prabhas is determined to complete both projects on schedule so that the films can arrive in theaters as planned. While "Fauji" is expected to release later this year, "Spirit" is targeting a release next year.



Mouni's Cannes Glam

Mouni Roy turned up the glam quotient at the Cannes red carpet, serving pure diva vibes amid the ongoing buzz around her personal life. The actress dropped a stunning carousel of photos and videos from the French Riviera, looking every bit glamorous in a dreamy off-shoulder crystal gown.

Sharing glimpses from her stylish Cannes outing, Mouni captioned the post, "en route to the Croisette" with the hashtag #Cannes2026. Adding more attitude to the vibe, she used the trending track "I Don't Chase, I Attract" by Affirmation Club, especially the viral line, "I love money, money loves me."

From posing elegantly inside a luxury car to confidently walking through the streets near the Croisette, Mouni's fashion game grabbed instant attention online. Her sleek bun, flawless makeup and sparkling diamond jewellery perfectly completed the high-fashion look.

The glamorous appearance comes at a time when reports about trouble in her marriage with businessman Suraj Nambiar continue to make headlines. The couple recently confirmed their separation through a joint social media statement.

Soon after, Suraj addressed rumours surrounding alimony, disputes and third-party involvement, strongly denying all speculation. Calling the reports "baseless" and "malicious," he clarified that the separation was mutual and respectful, while requesting privacy for both of them.

Rumours about the couple's relationship had started circulating after fans noticed that Mouni and Suraj had unfollowed each other on Instagram. Despite the ongoing chatter, Mouni's latest Cannes appearance proves she is keeping her focus firmly on style, confidence and the spotlight.

A Decade of DREAMS

Actress Shradha Srinath, who recently completed a decade in the film industry, shared an emotional and heartfelt note recalling the release of her debut film U Turn and her journey in cinema so far.

Taking to Instagram, the actress reflected on how quickly time had passed since her acting debut in 2016. She admitted that she once believed her career in films might not last even six months, but now she has successfully completed 10 years in the industry.

Shradha fondly remembered the Indian premiere of U Turn held at Bhumi-ka Theatre after the film's screening at the New York Indian Film Festival. She recalled being unprepared for the premiere until actress Sruthi Hariharan insisted she dress up for the special occasion and even lent her a designer outfit.

The actress also shared memories from the film's release day, which included promotional visits to a newspaper office, a radio station and a dance reality show. While eagerly reading reviews in her caravan, one harsh video review criticizing both the film and her

performance deeply affected her confidence at the time.

However, Shradha said the experience taught her an important lesson — that criticism and praise are both part of an actor's journey. She added that over the years she has learned to stay grounded and make decisions on her own terms.

Expressing gratitude, the actress thanked her family, friends, fans, directors, producers, technicians and colleagues who supported her throughout her career. She also became emotional while revisiting old photographs, ticket stubs and posters shared by friends and relatives during the release of U Turn.

Shradha noted that many people still recognize her as Rachana, the character she portrayed in the thriller. She described her 10-year journey in cinema as both challenging and rewarding, especially in the age of social media where comparisons are constant.

The actress concluded by saying that she feels grateful for the clarity and freedom to choose projects that align with her values and believes every actor's journey is unique.

